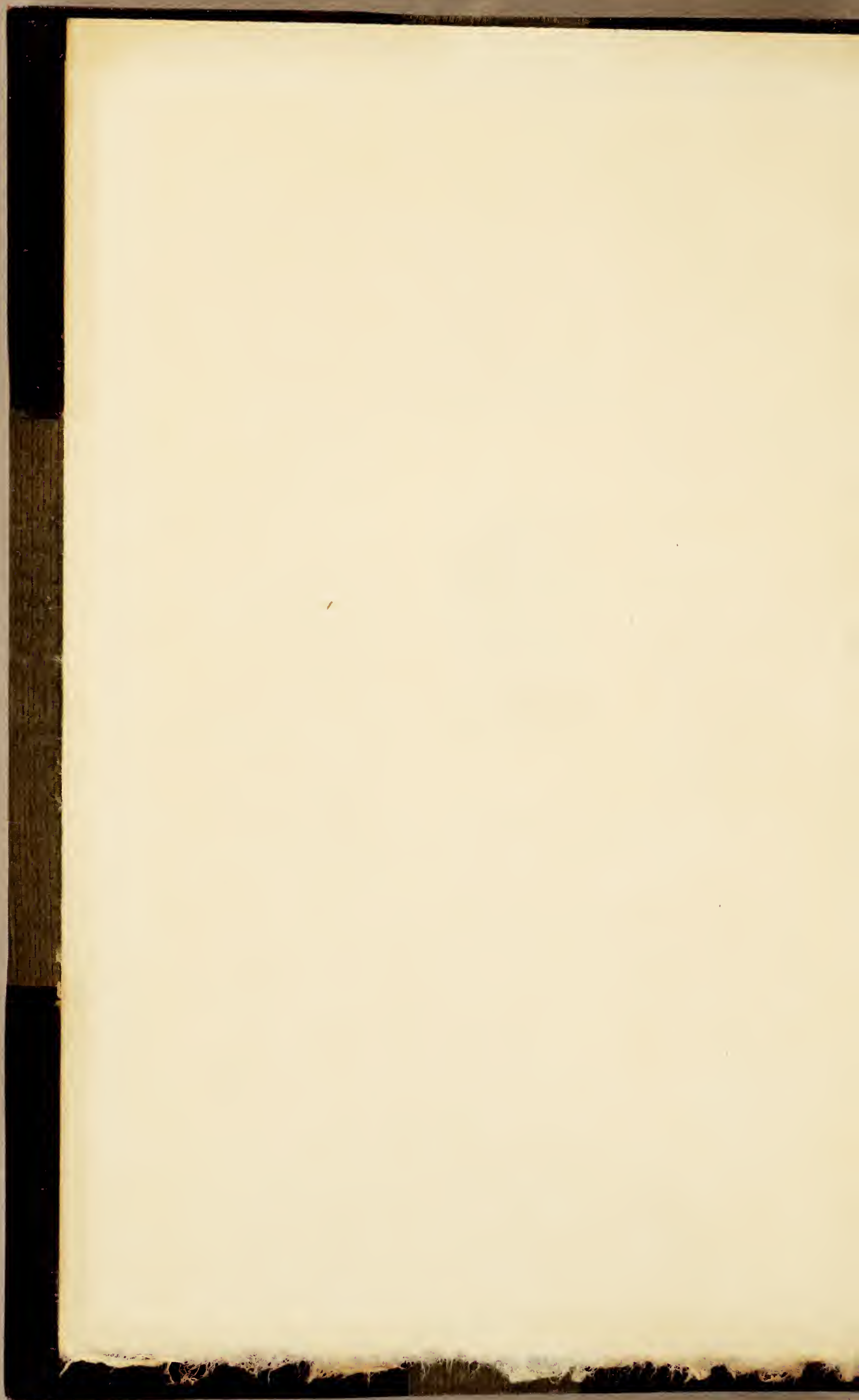






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78:5



THE  
REVOLUTION  
OF  
AMERICA.

BY

THE ABBÉ RAYNAL,

AUTHOR OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE ESTABLISHMENTS AND COMMERCE OF THE EUROPEANS IN BOTH THE INDIES.

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SALEM:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY SAMUEL HALL.

MDCCLXXXII.

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1875



# ADVERTISEMENT,

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

**T**H E Philosophical and Political History of the Establishments and Commerce of the Europeans, in both the Indies, by the Abbé RAYNAL, is certainly one of the finest works which have appeared since the revival of letters ; and perhaps the most instructive of any which have been known. It is an original as to its formation ; and ought to serve henceforward for a model. An additional part to this work, discussing the disputes of Great-Britain with her Colonies, has been long and ardently expected. In the course of his travels, the translator happily succeeded in obtaining a copy of this exquisite little piece, which has not yet made its appearance from any press. He publishes a French edition, in favour of those who will feel its eloquent reasoning more forcibly in its native language, at the same time with the following translation of it ; in which he has been desirous, perhaps in vain, that all the warmth, the grace, the strength, the dignity of the original, should not be lost. And he flatters himself, that the indulgence of the illustrious historian will not be wanting to a man, who, of his own motion, has taken the liberty to give this composition to the public, only from a strong persuasion, that its momentous argument will be useful, in a critical conjuncture, to that country which he loves with an ardour, that can be exceeded only by the nobler flame, which burns in the bosom of the philanthropic author, for the freedom and happiness of all the countries upon earth.

It may not, perhaps, be quite needless to observe, though it ought to be understood, that the valuation of sums, made in the original in foreign money, is, in the translation, made in sterling.

The abundant good sense, the political sagacity, and even the salutary sarcasm, to be found, amidst the effusions of benevolence, in this historical tract, could ne-



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[ iv ]  
ver, it is apprehended, be more opportunely laid before those whom it may concern, than now. It now seems to be the general and anxious expectation, that, before the rising of Parliament from its present session, some proper and efficacious steps will at last, at this high time, be thought of, towards closing the unnatural, the shameful, and distressful breach, between the mother-country and her colonies; a breach in which, as it is observed, with great truth, by the author of a Plan of Accommodation\*, founded in justice and liberality, "The people on both sides are  
" robbed of their truest interests, and made to sacri-  
" fice their mutual happiness, to gain nothing but  
" contempt and misery."

Let not Wisdom utter her voice in the streets, and no man regard her.

---

The Translator cannot help most solicitously wishing that some of his fellow-subjects, of the British dominions, may enter the lists for the prize proposed in the following Advertisement from the Academy of Lyons, in the hope that he shall have the happiness to see it born from the rest of the lettered world, by a hero of that people, who have been dear, tam Marti quam Mercurio, who are yet distinguished for their eloquence, and who, he trusts, when fraternal feuds shall be reconciled, will vindicate their superiority in arms. He humbly offers his service to any candidate for this prize, productive of so great celebrity, who may not know the ready means of doing it himself, to get his performance conveyed to Lyons, free of postage, provided that it be left with his Bookseller, Mr. Lockyer Davis, before the first of December, 1782.

*London, March 5, 1781.*

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\* Printed in 1780.

A D.



## ADVERTISEMENT

FROM

THE ACADEMY

OF SCIENCES, POLITE LITERATURE, AND ARTS,

AT LYONS.

THE Abbé RAYNAL, after having instructed mankind by his writings, would still contribute to the improvement of their knowledge, by exciting emulation. An Associate in the labours of the Academy of Lyons, he proposed to it to give out two subjects for prizes, of which he has constituted the fund, to be distributed by the Academy, to the authors whom it shall judge to have best answered the views of the propounded questions.

The Academy accepted of the offer with gratitude, and publishes the subjects without delay.

*The first subject proposed for the year 1782, relating exclusively to the manufactures and prosperity of the city of Lyons, is omitted here, as, however judicious and patriotic in the founder of the prize, it is an object only of particular concern, and, consequently, not interesting, like the second, to the world at large.*

FOR THE YEAR 1783.

THE ACADEMY proposes the following subject.

*Has the discovery of America been useful or hurtful to mankind.*

*If advantages have resulted from it, what are the means to preserve and increase them?*

*If disadvantages, what are the means to remedy them?*

The



The prize consists of the sum of fifty *Louis d'or*, which will be remitted to the successful author, or his assigns.

### C O N D I T I O N S.

Any person of any nation may be a competitor for this prize, except titular and veteran academicians. The associates of academies will be admitted. The authors must not let themselves be known, directly or indirectly; they will put some line, or motto, at the head of their performance, which will be accompanied by a note sealed up, containing the same line, or motto, with their names and places of abode.

The Academy, considering the importance of the subject, sets no limits to the length of the composition, but only wishes the author to write in French or Latin.

No work can be admitted after the first of February, 1783. The Academy will proclaim the prize the same year, in its public assembly, after St. Lewis's day, or the 25th of August.

The packets are to be sent to Lyons, free of postage, directed to

M. LA TOURRETTE, *Secrétaire perpétuel pour la classe des Sciences, Rue Boissac*; or to

M. DE BORY, *Secrétaire perpétuel pour la classe des Belles-Lettres, Rue Boissac*; or to

M. AIME' DE LA ROCHE, *Imprimeur-Libraire de l'Académie, maison des halles de la Gracette.*

Signed,

LA TOURRETTE,  
Perpetual Secretary.

Lyons, Sept. 5, 1780.

C O N-



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1917

STATE OF NEW YORK



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T H E  
R E V O L U T I O N  
O F  
A M E R I C A.

ENGLAND was just disengaged from a long and bloody war, in which her fleets had displayed the banner of victory in all seas; in which a dominion, already too vast, was augmented by an immense accession of territory in both the Indies. This splendid face of things might have an imposing air abroad; but the nation was reduced within to groan for its acquisitions and its triumphs. Overwhelmed with a debt of £.148,000,000, which cost her an interest of £.4,959,000, she was scarcely sufficient to the most necessary expences with the five millions eight hundred thousand pounds which remained to her of her revenue; and this revenue, so far from being capable of increase, had no certain and assured consistency.

Land remained loaded with a higher tax than it ever had been in time of peace. New taxes had been laid on windows and on houses. These acts laid a heavy charge on all real estate. Wine, plate, cards, dice, all that was regarded as an object of luxury, or amusement, paid more than could have been thought possible. To reimburse itself for the sacrifice made to the preservation of the public health, in the prohibition of spiritous liquors, the treasury had recourse to malt, beer, cider, and all the usual beverages of the people. The sea-ports dispatched nothing to foreign countries, and received nothing from them, but what was burthened cruelly with duties, on the import and the export. Raw materials and workmanship were risen to so high



a price in Great-Britain, that her merchants found themselves supplanted in countries where they had never before experienced a competition. The profits of her commerce, with all parts of the globe, amounted not annually to above two millions and a half ; and, from this balance in her favour, there must have been deducted a million and a half, paid in interest to foreigners, on their capitals placed in her public funds.

The springs of the state were strained. All the muscles of the body-politic, experiencing at once a violent tension, were in some sort displaced. It was a critical moment. It was necessary to let the people breathe. They could not be relieved by a diminution of expence. That of the government was necessary, either to give value to conquests bought at the price of so much treasure, at the price of so much blood ; or to restrain the house of Bourbon, angered by the humiliations of the last war, and by the sacrifices of the last peace. In default of other means, to fix both the security of the present, and the prosperity of the future, an idea was formed of calling the colonies to the aid of the mother-country. This view was wise and just.

The members of a confederacy ought all, in proportion to the extent of their powers, to contribute to its defence and to its splendour, since it is by the public power alone that each class can preserve the intire and peaceable enjoyment of its possessions. The indigent man has, without doubt, less interest in it than the rich ; but he has the interest of his quiet in the first instance, and in the next, that of the preservation of the public wealth, which he is called upon to partake of by his industry. There is no principle of society more evident ; and yet no fault in politics more common than its infraction. Whence can arise this perpetual contradiction between the knowledge and the conduct of those who govern ? From the vice of the legislative power, which exaggerates the maintenance of the public power, and usurps, for its fancies, a part of the funds destined to this maintenance. The gold of  
the



the trader, and of the husbandman, with the subsistence of the poor, torn from them, in the name of the state, in their fields and their habitations, and prostituted in courts to interest and to vice, goes to swell the pomp of a set of men who flatter, hate, and corrupt their master ; goes ultimately into still viler hands, to pay the scandal and the ignominy of their pleasures. It is prodigally squandered in a fastuous shew of grandeur, the vain decoration of those who cannot attain to real grandeur, and in festivities and entertainments, the resource of impotent idleness, in the midst of the cares and labours which the right government of an empire would demand. A portion of it, it is true, is given to the public wants ; but inattention, and incapacity, apply it without judgment, as without œconomy. Authority deceived, and which will not condescend even to make an effort at being undeceived ; suffers an unjust distribution in the taxes, and a manner of gathering them which is itself but an oppression more. Then is every patriotic sentiment extinguished. A war is established between the prince and subjects. They who raise the revenues of the state appear to be no other than the enemies of the citizen. He defends his fortune from taxation as he would defend it from invasion. Whatever cunning can purloin from power seems lawful gain ; and the subjects, corrupted by the government, make reprisals on the master by whom they are pillaged. They perceive not, that in this unequal combat, they are themselves dupes and victims. The insatiable and ardent treasury, less satisfied with what is given, than irritated by what has been refused, reaches eagerly, with a hundred hands, after what one alone has dared to divert from its gripe. It joins the activity of power to that of interest. Vexations are multiplied, under the specious name of chastisement and justice ; and the monster who beggars all those whom he torments, thanks heaven devoutly for the number of the criminals who have been punished by him, and of the crimes by which he is enriched. Happy the sovereign who should not disdain, for



the prevention of so many abuses, to render to his subjects a faithful account of the employment of the sums he might exact ! But this sovereign has not yet appeared ; and, without doubt, he never will appear. The debt, however, of the protected people, towards the protector-state, is not a less necessary and sacred tie ; and no nation has disowned it. The English colonies in North-America had not given an example of it ; and never had the British ministry recourse to them without obtaining the succour it solicited.

But this succour was granted in gifts, and not in taxes ; since the concession of it was preceeded by free and public deliberations in the assemblies of each establishment. The mother-country had found herself engaged in expensive and cruel wars. Tumultuous and enterprizing parliaments had disturbed her tranquility. She had fallen into the hands of ministers corrupt and bold ; unhappily disposed to raise the authority of the throne upon the ruin of all the rights, and all the powers of the people. And even revolutions had taken place, before an attack upon a custom, established and strengthened by the happy experience of two ages, had ever once been dreamed of.

The colonies in the new world had been accustomed to regard this mode of furnishing their contingent, in men and money, as a right. Had this pretension been doubtful, or erroneous, prudence would have forbidden its being too openly attacked. The art of maintaining authority is a delicate art, which requires more circumspection than is generally thought. They who govern are perhaps too much accustomed to hold men in contempt. They regard them too much as slaves, subdued and bent down by nature, whilst they are only so from habit. If you lay on them a new load, take care lest they shake it off with fury and with interest. Forget not that the lever of power has no other fulcrum than opinion ; that the power of those who govern is in reality but the power of those who suffer government. Remind not people attentively occupied by their labours, or sleeping in their chains,



chains, to lift up their eyes to truth too terrible for you ; and whilst they are obeying, bring not to their remembrance their right to command. When the moment of this fearful rousing shall arrive ; when they shall have thought in earnest that they are not made for their magistrates, but that their magistrates are made for them ; when they shall once have been able to bring themselves together, to feel the communication of kindred minds, and to pronounce with a voice unanimous ; *We will not have this law ; this practice is offensive* ; medium is no more ; you will be constrained, by an unavoidable alternative, either to punish or to yield ; either to be tyrannical or weak ; and your authority henceforth detested or despised, whichever part it take, will have to chuse from the people but their open insolence, or their hidden hate.

The first duty, therefore, of a wise administration, is to manage the prevailing opinions in any country : for opinion is the property most dear to man, dearer even than his life, and consequently much dearer than his wealth. A wise administration may, without doubt, endeavour to rectify opinions by information, or to alter them by persuasion, if they tend to the diminution of the public power. But it is not permitted to thwart them without necessity ; and there never was any necessity for rejecting the system adopted by North-America.

In effect, whether the different settlements in this new world had been authorized, as they wished, to send representatives to parliament, where they might have deliberated with their fellow-citizens on the necessities of the British empire at large ; or, whether they had continued to examine within themselves what should be the contribution which it was right for them to make, no inconvenience could have resulted from it to the treasury. In one case, the voice of their delegated claimants would have been drowned in that of the majority ; and these provinces would have found themselves legally loaded with such a portion of the burden as it should be wished to make them bear. In  
the



the other, the ministry, continuing to dispose of the dignities, the employments, the pensions, and even of the elections, would have experienced no more resistance to its will in that hemisphere than in this.

But the maxims consecrated by custom in America were not founded in prejudice alone. The pretensions of the colonists rested on the nature of their charters, and on the still more solid basis of that right of every English subject, not to be taxed without consent, expressed by himself or his representative. This right, which ought to be that of every people, since it is founded on the eternal law of reason, originated so far back as in the reign of the first Edward. From that epoch the Englishman has never lost sight of it. In peace, in war, under weak or wicked kings, in slavish or tumultuous times, it has been his unremitted claim. Under the Tudors, this Englishman has been seen to give up some of his most precious privileges, and, unresistingly, to submit his neck to the ax of tyrants; but never to renounce the right of self-taxation. It was in the defence of it that he has shed rivers of blood, that he has punished or dethroned his kings. In short, at the Revolution in 1688, this right was solemnly acknowledged, by the celebrated act, in which liberty was seen to trace, with the same hand with which it had driven out the royal despot, the conditions of the contract between a nation and the sovereign it had newly chosen. This prerogative of a people, much more sacred, without all question, than so many imaginary rights which superstition would sanctify in tyrants, was, with regard to England, at once both the instrument and the rampart of her liberty. She thought, she felt, that it was the only barrier which could for ever limit despotism; that the moment which strips a people of this privilege, condemns it to oppression; and that the funds, raised in appearance for its security, are sooner or later subversive to its ruin. The Englishman, in founding his colony, had carried with him these principles beyond the seas; and the same ideas had been transmitted to his progeny. Ah!



Ah! if in the countries even of Europe, in which slavery seems long since to have taken its seat in the midst of vices, of riches, and of arts; in which the despotism of armies supports the despotism of courts; in which man, chained from his cradle, and bound tightly by all the cords both of policy and superstition, has never breathed the air of liberty; if in these countries, notwithstanding, they who have once in their lives reflected on the fate of nations, cannot forbear adopting the maxims, and envying the happiness of the people who knew how to make it the ground-work and foundation of their constitution; how much more ought the English natives of America to be attached to the glorious birth-right they inherit! They know the price at which their ancestors had bought it. The very soil which they inhabit must produce in them a sentiment favourable to these ideas. Dispersed throughout an immense continent; free as the wild nature which surrounds them, amidst their rocks, their mountains, the vast plains of their deserts, on the confines of these forests in which all is still in its savage state, and where there are no traces of either the slavery or the tyranny of man, they seem to receive from every natural object a lesson of liberty and independence. Besides, these people, given up almost all of them to agriculture and to commerce, to useful labours, which elevate and fortify the soul in inspiring simple manners, hitherto as far removed from riches as from poverty, cannot be yet corrupted either by the excess of luxury, or by the excess of want. It is in this state above all others, that the man who enjoys liberty is most capable to maintain it, and to shew himself jealous in the defence of an hereditary right, which seems to be the most certain security for all the rest. Such was the resolution of the Americans.

Whether the British ministry were ignorant of these dispositions, or whether they hoped that their delegates would succeed in changing them, they laid hold of the moment of a glorious peace for exacting a forced contribution from the colonies. For war, and let  
it



it be well remarked, war, whether unfortunate or successful, serves always as a pretext for the usurpations of governments; as if the directors of the warring powers proposed to themselves by it less to vanquish their enemies than to enslave their subjects. The year 1764 saw the birth of the famous stamp-act, which forbid the admission in the courts of justice of any instrument which should not be written on paper marked and sold for the profit of the British treasury.

The English provinces of North-America become indignant at this usurpation of their most precious and most sacred rights. By an unanimous agreement they renounce the consumption of whatever was furnished them by the mother-country, 'till it should have withdrawn this illegal and oppressive bill. Even the women, whose weakness might have been feared, are the most ardent, sacrificing the subserviencies to their dress and ornament; and the men, animated by this example, give up on their part other conveniencies and enjoyments. Many cultivators of land quit the plough, to form themselves to the industry of the workshop; and wool, flax, and cotton, coarsely wrought, are sold at the price which would before have purchased the finest cloths and the most beautiful stuffs.

This kind of conspiracy stuns the government. By the clamour of the merchants, whose wares are without vent, its inquietude is increased. The enemies of the ministry uphold these discontents; and the stamp-act is revoked after two years of a convulsive agitation, which in other times would have lighted up a civil war.

But the triumph of the colonies is of short duration. The parliament, which had retreated but with extreme repugnance, ordains, in 1767, that the revenue which could not be obtained by means of stamps, should be raised by taxes on the glass, the lead, the paste-board, the colours, the paper-hangings, and the tea, which are carried from England to America. The people of the Northern Continent are not less revolted at this innovation than at the former. In vain are they told that



that no one could dispute the right of Great-Britain to lay on her exportations the duties which her interest demands, since she denies not to her colonies, situated beyond the seas, the liberty of fabricating themselves the wares subjected to the new taxation. This subterfuge appears but as a derision to men, who, being cultivators of land alone, and reduced to the having no communication but with their mother-country, cannot procure, either by their own industry, or by foreign connections, the objects which had recently been taxed. Whether this tribute be paid in the old or new world, they perceive that the word makes no alteration in the thing, and that their liberty would not be less attacked by this mode, than by that which had been repelled by them with success. The colonists see clearly that the government would beguile them; and they will not be beguiled. These political sophisms appear to them as they are, the mask of tyranny.

Nations in general are made more for feeling than for thinking. The greatest part of them never had an idea of analysing the nature of the power by which they are governed. They obey without reflection, and because they have the habit of obeying. The origin and the object of the first national associations being unknown to them, all resistance to government appears to them a crime. It is chiefly in those states where the principles of legislation are confounded with those of religion, that this blindness is to be met with. The habit of believing, favours the habit of suffering. Man renounces not any one object with impunity. It seems as if nature would revenge herself upon him who dares thus to degrade her. The servile disposition which she stamps upon his soul in consequence, extends itself throughout. It makes a duty of resignation as of meanness; and kissing chains of all kinds with respect, trembles to examine either its doctrines or its laws. In the same manner that a single extravagance in religious opinions is sufficient to make many more to be adopted, by minds once deceived, a



first usurpation of government opens the door to all the rest. He who believes the greater, believes the less; he who can do the greater, can do the less. It is by this double abuse of credulity and authority that all the absurdities in matters of religion and of policy have been introduced into the world for the harassing and the crushing of the human race. Thus at the first signal of liberty amongst nations, they have been prompted to shake off both these yokes together; and the epoch in which the human mind began to discuss the abuses of the church and clergy, is that in which reason perceived at last the rights of men; and in which courage attempted to set the first limits to despotic power. The principles of toleration and of liberty, established in the English colonies, had made them a different people from all others. There it was known what was the dignity of man; and when the British ministry violated it, it could not be otherwise but that a people all composed of denizens, should rise against the wickedness of the attempt.

Three years elapsed, without a revenue from any one of the taxes which had so wounded the Americans to the quick. This was something; but it was not all to which men jealous of their prerogatives had pretensions. They insisted upon a general and formal renunciation of what had been so illegally ordained; and this satisfaction was given them in 1770. Tea only was excepted. But the object of this exception was only to palliate the shame of entirely giving up the superiority of the mother-country over her colonies: for this duty was not more cogently exacted than the others had been.

The ministry, deceived by their delegates, believed undoubtedly that the disposition of the new-world was altered, when, in 1773, they ordered the collection of the duty upon tea.

At this news the indignation becomes general in North-America. In some provinces, formal thanks are agreed upon to be rendered to the masters of vessels who would not suffer this production to make any part



part of their cargo. In others, the merchants to whom it is consigned will not receive it. Here, he is declared an enemy of his country who shall dare to vend it. There, they are stigmatized with the same reproach who shall keep it in their stores. Many provinces solemnly renounce the use of this elegant refreshment. A still greater number burn what they had remaining of this leaf, 'till then the object of their delight. The tea sent to this part of the globe was valued at more than two hundred thousand pounds; and not a single chest of it was landed. Boston was the principal theatre of this insurrection. Its inhabitants destroyed, in their very port, three cargoes of tea which arrived from Europe.

This great town had always appeared more occupied by a sense of its rights than the rest of America. The least attempt that was made upon their privileges had been repelled without scruple and without reserve. This resistance, sometimes not unaccompanied by tumult, had for some years been tiresome to government. The ministry who had a vengeance to wreak, seized too eagerly upon the circumstance of a blameable excess; and required the parliament to punish it severely.

Moderate men wished that the offending town might be sentenced only to an indemnification proportioned to the waste that had been made in its road, and to such amends as it ought to make for not having punished this act of violence. This sentence was thought too slight; and on the 13th of March, 1774, a bill was passed for shutting up the port of Boston, and forbidding any thing to be landed or loaded at it.

The court of London applauded itself for so rigorous a law, and doubted not but that it would bring the Bostonians to that disposition to slavery which it had vainly laboured 'till then to give them. If, contrary to all appearance, these sturdy men should persevere in their pretensions, their neighbours would be ardent in profiting from the interdiction laid upon the principal harbour of the province. Supposing the worst, the other colonies, long since jealous of that of



Massachusetts, would abandon it with indifference to its melancholy fate, and gather up the immense trade which would flow in to them on the tide of its misfortunes. By these means would be broken the union of these different establishments, which had for some years past acquired a greater degree of consistency than was pleasing to the mother-country.

The expectation of the ministry was totally deceived. An act of rigour sometimes over-awes. The people who have murmured as long as the thunder-storm growled only at a distance, when it comes to burst upon them, frequently submit. It is then that they weigh the advantages and disadvantages of resistance; that they contemplate their own strength and that of their oppressors; that a panic terror seizes those who have every thing to lose, without any thing to gain; that they lift up their voice, that they intimidate, that they corrupt; that division arises in the minds of men, and that the community is separated into two factions, which irritate each other, which come oftentimes to blows, and cut each other's throats under the eyes of their tyrants, who with sweet complacency behold their streaming blood. But tyrants seldom find accomplices but amongst a people already corrupted to their hands. It is vice which gives them allies amongst those whom they oppress. It is unmanly softness, which, filled with terrors, dares not barter its repose for honourable peril. It is the vile ambition to command, which lends its arm to despotic power, and consents to be a slave in order to domineer; to give up a people in order to partake their spoil; and to renounce real honour for the obtaining of titles, the nick-names of honour. It is, above all, the indifferent and cold personality, which is the last vice amongst a people, the last crime of governments, for it is ever the government which gives it birth; it is that, which from principle sacrifices a nation to a man, and the happiness of an age and of posterity to the enjoyment of a day and of a moment. None of these vices, the production of a society opulent and voluptuous,



tuous, of a society grown old and verging to its end, belong to a people newly established and occupied in useful labours. The Americans remained united. The execution of a bill, which they called inhuman, barbarous, and bloody, tended but to strengthen them in the resolution of maintaining their rights with the more accord and constancy.

At Boston, the acrid and ardent spirit is more and more exalted. The cry of religion adds force to that of liberty. The houses of worship re-echo with the most violent exhortations against England. It was without doubt an interesting spectacle for philosophy, to see that even in temples, at the foot of altars, where superstition has so often blessed the chains of nations, where priests have so often flattered tyrants, liberty lifted up her voice in defence of the privileges of an oppressed people; and if it can be thought that the Deity vouchsafes to look down upon the unhappy feuds of men, it was better pleased undoubtedly to see its sanctuary consecrated to this use, and hymns to liberty make a part of the worship by which it was addressed. These exhortations of the preachers must have had a great effect; and when a free people invokes heaven against oppression, it delays not long to have recourse to arms.

The other inhabitants of the province of Massachusetts disdain even the idea of drawing the least advantage from the disasters of the capital. They think but of drawing closer the bonds which unite them with the Bostonians, disposed rather to seek a grave in the ruins of their common country, than to let the least assault be made on rights which they had learned to prize more highly than their lives.

All the provinces attach themselves to the cause of Boston; and their affection encreases in proportion to the sufferings of this unhappy town. Nearly as culpable of a resistance so severely punished, they are well aware that the mother-country but defers her vengeance against them; and that all the grace with which the most favoured can be flattered, is to be the  
last



last on which the hand of oppression shall be doomed to fall.

These dispositions to a general insurrection are augmented by the act against Boston, which is seen circulating throughout the continent upon paper edged with black, emblematical of mourning for liberty departed. Soon the disquietude communicates itself from house to house. The inhabitants assemble and converse together in the public places: and writings, full of eloquence and vigour, are delivered every where from the presses.

“The severities of the British Parliament against Boston (say they in these writings) should cause all the American provinces to tremble. They have now nothing left them but to chuse between fire and sword and the horrors of death, or the yoke of passive, slavish obedience. Behold the æra of an important revolution is at length arrived, the event of which, as it shall be happy or successful, will claim and fix for ever either the regret or the admiration of posterity.

“Shall we be freemen, or be slaves? On the solution of this grand problem is about to depend, for the present, the fate of three millions of men, and, for the future, the happiness or misery of their numberless descendants.

“Awake then, rouse then, O Americans! Never did clouds so black hang over the region you inhabit. You are called rebels, because you will not be taxed but by your representatives. Vindicate this just pretension by your courage, or seal the loss of it with all your blood.

“Time for deliberation is no more. Whilst the hand of the oppressor labours incessantly to forge your chains, silence would be guilt, inaction infamy. Let the preservation of the rights of the commonweal be your supreme law. That man would be the last of slaves, who, in the danger into which the liberty of America is fallen, would not exert every effort to preserve it.”

This



This disposition was the common one: but the important object, the difficult thing, in the midst of a general tumult, was to contrive that a calm might be brought on, by favour of which might be formed a concert of wills, to give dignity, strength, and consistency to their resolutions. It is this concert, which, of a multitude of scattered parts, and each easily to be broken, composes a whole that is not to be rendered tractable, unless it be to be divided by policy or by power. The necessity of this grand combination, or totality, is strikingly perceived by the provinces of New-Hampshire, of Massachusetts, of Rhode-Island, of Connecticut, of New-York, of New-Jersey, of the Delaware counties, of Maryland, of Pennsylvania, of Virginia, and of both the Carolinas. These twelve colonies, which were afterwards joined by Georgia, sent deputies to Philadelphia, in the month of September, 1774, charged with the defence of their rights and interests.

The disputes of the mother-country with her colonies, assume at this period an importance to which they had not been before intitled. It is no longer a few individuals who make an obstinate resistance to imperious masters. It is the struggle of one body of men against another; of the Congress of America against the Parliament of England; of a nation against a nation. By the resolutions taken on either side, minds mutually are heated. The ferment of animosity increases. All hope of reconciliation vanishes. On each side the sword is whetted. Great-Britain sends troops to the new world. This other hemisphere prepares for its defence. Its citizens become soldiers. The combustibles are collected; the conflagration is about to blaze.

Gage, the commander of the royal troops, sends from Boston, in the night of the 18th of April, 1775, a detachment charged with the destruction of a magazine of arms, and other military stores, collected by the Americans at Concord. This body of troops meet at Lexington with some militia; whom they disperse with little difficulty, continue their march rapidly, and



and execute the commission to which they had been appointed. But scarcely are they on their return towards the capital but they find themselves assailed, for the space of fifteen miles, by a furious multitude, and death on each side is given and received. English blood, so often shed in Europe by English hands, irrigates America in its turn, and the civil war is embarked in.

On the same field of battle, the following months, more regular combats are beheld: Warren becomes one of the victims of these unnatural and murderous actions. The Congress honour his ashes.

“He is not dead, (said the orator) this excellent citizen shall never die. His memory shall be for ever present, and for ever dear, to all good men, to all who love their country. In the short space of a life but of three and thirty years, he had displayed the talents of a statesman, the virtues of a senator, the soul of a hero.

“Approach, all you whom the same interest inspires; approach your countryman’s still bleeding body. Wash with your tears his honourable wounds. But hang not too long over this inanimated corse. Return to your habitations to fill them with detestation at the crime of tyranny. Let your horrible descriptions of it make each particular hair to stand on end upon your children’s heads, inflame their eyes with noble rage, stamp menaces on their brows, and draw, by their mouths, indignation from their hearts! Then, then, shall you give them arms; and your last, your fondest wish shall be, that they may return victorious, or may die like Warren.”

The disturbances by which the province of Massachusetts was agitated, were repeated in the other provinces. The scenes, indeed, were not bloody, because there were no British troops; but the Americans seize every where on the forts, the arms, and the military stores: they every where expel their governors, and the other agents of England; and every where harass such of the inhabitants as appeared favourable

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to its cause. Some enterprizing men have the spirit even to take possession of the works formerly erected by the French upon the lake Champlain, between New-England and Canada, and to make an irruption into this vast region.

Whilst simple individuals, or detached districts, are thus usefully serving the common cause, the Congress is occupied with the care of assembling an army. The command of it is given to George Washington, a native of Virginia, and known by some happy exploits in preceeding wars. Instantly the new general flies to the province of Massachusetts, drives the royal troops from post to post, and obliges them to shut themselves up in Boston. Six thousand of these old soldiers, escaped from the sword, from sickness, from all the miseries incident to their profession, and pressed by hunger, or by the enemy, embark the 24th of March 1776, with a precipitation which partakes of flight. They go to seek an asylum in Nova-Scotia, which remained, as well as Florida, faithful to its ancient masters.

This success was the first step of English America towards the revolution. It was begun to be openly desired. The principles which justified it were dispersed on all sides. These principles, which were indebted for their birth to Europe, and particularly to England, had been transplanted in America by philosophy. The knowledge, and the discoveries of the mother-country were turned against herself, and she was told that,

Care must be taken not to confound together society and government. That they may be known distinctly, their origin should be considered.

Man, thrown, as it were, by chance upon this globe, surrounded by all the evils of nature; obliged continually to defend and protect his life against the storms and tempests of the air, against the inundations of water, against the fire of volcanos, against the intemperature of frigid or torrid zones, against the sterility of the earth, which refuses him aliment, or its baneful fecundity, which makes poisons spring up be-

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neath



death his feet; in short, against the claws and teeth of savage beasts, who dispute with him his habitation and his prey, and, attacking his person, seem resolved to render themselves rulers of this globe, of which he thinks himself to be the master: man in this state, alone and abandoned to himself, could do nothing for his preservation. It was necessary, therefore, that he should unite himself, and associate with his like, in order to bring together their strength and intelligence in common stock. It is by this union that he has triumphed over so many evils, that he has fashioned this globe to his use, restrained the rivers, subjugated the seas, insured his subsistence, conquered a part of the animals in obliging them to serve him, and driven others far from his empire, to the depths of deserts or of woods, where their number diminishes from age to age. What a man alone would not have been able to effect, men have executed in concert; and all together they preserve their work. Such is the origin, such the advantage and the end of all society.

Government owes its birth to the necessity of preventing and repressing the injuries which the associated individuals had to fear from one another. It is the sentinel who watches, in order that the common labours be not disturbed.

Thus society originates in the wants of men, government in their vices. Society tends always to good; government ought always to tend to the repressing of evil. Society is the first, it is in its origin independent and free; government was instituted for it, and is but its instrument. It is for one to command; it is for the other to obey. Society created the public power; government, which has received it from society, ought to consecrate it entirely to its use. In short, society is essentially good; government, as is well known, may be, and is but too often evil.

It has been said that we were all born equal; that is not so: that we had all the same rights. I am ignorant of what are rights, where there is an inequality of talents, or of strength, and no security nor sanction:



function : that nature offered to us all the same dwelling, and the same resources ; that is not so : that we are all endowed indifferently with the same means of defence ; that is not so : and I know not in what sense it can be true, that we all enjoy the same qualities of mind and body.

There is amongst men an original inequality which nothing can remedy. It must last for ever ; and all that can be obtained by the best legislation, is, not to destroy it, but to prevent the abuse of it.

But in making distinctions between her children, like a step-mother, in creating some children strong and others weak, has not nature herself formed the germ or principle of tyranny ? I do not think it can be denied ; especially if we look back to a time anterior to all legislation, a time in which man will be seen as passionate and as void of reason as a brute.

What then have founders of nations, what have legislators proposed to themselves ? To obviate all the disasters arising from this germ when it is expanded, by a sort of artificial equality, which might reduce all the members of a society, without exception, under an impartial, sole authority. It is a sword which moves gently, equably, and indifferently, over every head : but this sword was ideal. It was necessary that there should be a hand, a corporeal being who should hold it.

What has resulted thence ? Why, that the history of civilized man is but the history of his misery. All the pages of it are stained with blood ; some with the blood of the oppressors, the others with the blood of the oppressed.

In this point of view, man appears more wicked and more miserable than a beast. Different species of beasts subsist on different species. But societies of men have never ceased to attack each other. Even in the same society there is no condition but devours and is devoured, whatever may have been or are the forms of the government, or artificial equality, which have been opposed to the primitive and natural inequality.



But are these forms of government, supposing them made by the choice, and the free choice, of the first settlers in a country, and whatever sanction they may have received, whether that of oaths, or of unanimous accord, or of their duration, are they obligatory upon their descendants? There is no such thing: and it is impossible that you Englishmen, who have successively undergone so many different revolutions in your political constitution, tossed as you have been from monarchy to tyranny, from tyranny to aristocracy, from aristocracy to democracy, and from democracy to anarchy; it is impossible that you, without accusing yourselves of rebellion and of perjury, can think otherwise than I do.

We examine things with a philosophic eye; and it is well known, that it is not the speculations of philosophers which bring on civil troubles. No subjects are more patient than we are. I proceed then in pursuit of my object, without any cause to fear that mischief can follow from my reasoning.

If the people are happy under their form of government, they will keep it. If they are unhappy, it will not be either your opinions or mine, it will be the impossibility of suffering more, and longer, which will determine them to change it; a salutary impulse, which the oppressor will call revolt, though it be but the just exercise of a natural and unalienable right of the man who is oppressed, and even of the man who is not oppressed.

A man wills and chuses for himself. He cannot will nor chuse for another; and it would be a madness to will and to chuse for him who is yet unborn, for him who will not yet exist for ages. There is no individual but who, discontented with the form of the government of his country, may go elsewhere to seek a better. There is no society but which has the same right to change, as their ancestors had to adopt, their form of government. Upon this point, it is with societies as if they were at the first moment of their civilization. Without which there would be a great evil;



evil ; nay, the greatest of evils would be without a remedy. Millions of men would be condemned to misery without end. Conclude then with me,

That there is no form of government which has the prerogative to be immutable.

No political authority, which, created yesterday, or a thousand years ago, may not be abrogated in ten years' time or to-morrow.

No power, however respectable, however sacred, that is authorized to regard the state as its property.

Whoever thinks otherwise is a slave. It is to be an idolator of the work of his own hands.

Whoever thinks otherwise is a madman, who devotes himself to eternal misery, who devotes to it his family, his children, and his children's children, in allowing to his ancestors the right of stipulating for him when he existed not, and in arrogating to himself the right of stipulating for a progeny which does not yet exist.

All authority in this world has begun either by the consent of the subjects, or by the power of the master. In both one and the other case, it may justly end. There is no prescription in favour of tyranny against liberty.

The truth of these principles is so much the more essential, because that all power by its very nature tends to despotism, even in the most jealous nations, even in yours, ye Englishmen, yes, in yours.

I have heard it said by a whig, by a fanatic, if you will ; but words of great sense escape sometimes from a madman ; I have heard it said by him, that so long as the power should be wanting of taking to Tyburn a bad king, or at least a bad minister, with as little formality, preparation, tumult, or surprize, as the obscurest malefactor is conducted thither, the nation would not have either that just idea, or that full enjoyment, of their rights, which became a people who dared to think or to say that they were free ; and yet an administration, by your own acknowledgement, ignorant, corrupted, and audacious, precipitates you, with  
imperiousness



imperiousness and with impunity, into the most profound abyss!

The quantity of your circulating cash is inconsiderable. You are overwhelmed with paper; which you have under all sorts of denominations. Were all the gold of Europe collected in your treasury, it would scarcely pay the nation's debt. We know not by what incredible illusion this fictitious money is kept up. The most frivolous event might in the course of a day throw it into discredit. There is need but of an alarm to bring on a sudden bankruptcy. The dreadful consequences which would follow this failure of faith, are beyond our imagination. And, behold, such is the instant marked out for you to make you declare against your colonies, that is, to make you raise up against yourselves, an unjust, mad, ruinous war. What will become of you, when an important branch of your commerce shall be destroyed; when you shall have but a third of your possessions; when you shall have massacred a million or two of your countrymen; when your force shall be exhausted, your traders ruined, your manufacturers reduced to starve; when your debt shall be augmented, and your revenue decreased! Look well to it; the blood of the Americans will sooner or later fall heavy on your heads. Its effusion will be revenged by your own hands; and you are arriving at the point.

*But, say you, these people are rebels.*—Rebels! And why? because they will not be your slaves. A people subjected to the will of another people, who can dispose as they chuse of their government, of their laws, and of their trade; tax them at their pleasure; set bounds to their industry, and enchain it by arbitrary prohibitions, are bond-servants, yes, certainly are bond-servants; and their servitude is worse than what they would undergo if governed by a tyrant. Deliverance from the oppression of a tyrant is effected by his expulsion, or his death. You have delivered yourselves by each of these methods. But a nation is not to be put to death, is not to be expelled. Liberty



erty is only to be expected from a rupture, which by its consequences involves one of the nations, and sometimes both of them, in ruin. A tyrant is a monster with a single head, which may be struck off at a single blow. A tyrannic nation is an hydra with a thousand heads, for the cutting off of which a thousand swords must be lifted up together. The crime of oppression committed by a tyrant collects all the indignation upon him alone. The commission of the same crime by a numerous society, scatters the horror and the shame of it upon a multitude, which never blushes. It is every body's fault and nobody's; and the resentment of injury wanders wildly in despair, without knowing where to fix, or whither it is carried.

*But they are our subjects*——Your subjects! no more than the inhabitants of Wales are subjects to those of Lancashire. The authority of one nation over another cannot be founded but upon conquest, upon general consent, or upon conditions proposed on one part, and accepted on the other. Conquest binds no more than theft: the consent of ancestors cannot be obligatory upon descendants: and there can be no condition which must not be understood to be exclusive of the sacrifice of liberty. Liberty is not to be bartered for any thing, because there is not any thing which is of a comparable price. Such have been the discourses held by you to your tyrants, such hold we to you for your colonists.

*The earth which they occupy is our's*——Your's! it is thus you call it because you usurped it. But be it so. Does not the charter of concession oblige you to treat the Americans as countrymen? Do you do so? But we are well employed here truly in talking of concessions by charters, by which men grant what they are not masters of, what consequently they have not the right to grant to a handful of weak people, forced by circumstances to receive as a gratification that which belongs to them of natural right. And then, have the descendants who are now living been called to a compact signed by their ancestors? Either  
confess



confess the truth of this principle, or recall the descendants of James. What right had you to drive him away which we have not to separate ourselves from you? say the Americans to you: and what have you to say in answer?

*They are ungrateful, we are their founders; we have been their defenders; we have run in debt upon their account*——Say, as much or more upon your own than theirs. If you have undertaken their defence, it was as you would have undertaken that of the Sultan of Constantinople, had your ambition or your interest required it. But have they not requited you, in delivering up to you their productions; in receiving your merchandize exclusively at the exorbitant price you would please to put upon it; in subjecting themselves to prohibitions which cramped their industry, and to restrictions by which you have oppressed their property? Have they not helped you? Have they not run in debt upon your account? Have they not taken arms and fought for you? When you have made your requests to them, which is the proper way of dealing with freemen, have they not complied with them? When did you ever experience a refusal from them, but when you clapped a bayonet to their breast, and said, *Your money or life; die or be slaves?* What! because you have been beneficent, have you a right to be oppressive? What! and shall nations too build on gratitude the barbarous claim, to debase, and trample under foot, those who have had the misfortune to receive their favours? Ah! individuals perhaps, though it is by no means a duty, individuals may, perhaps, in a benefactor tolerate a tyrant. In them, it is great, it is magnanimous, undoubtedly, to consent to be wretched, that they may not be ungrateful. But nations have a different morality. The public happiness is the first law, as the first duty. The first obligation of these great bodies is with themselves. They owe, before all other things, liberty and justice to the members which compose them. Every child which is born to the state, every new citizen who comes to breathe the



the air of the country he has chosen, or nature given him, is intitled to the greatest happiness he can enjoy. Every obligation which cannot be reconciled with that, is broken. Every contrary claim, is a wicked attempt upon his rights. And what is it to him, that his ancestors have been relieved, if he is destined to be himself oppressed? With what right can be exacted from him the payment of this usurious debt of benefits, which he has never felt? No, no. The wishing to arm one's self with such a claim, against a whole nation, and its posterity, is to overthrow all the ideas of policy and order, and, whilst one invokes the name of morality, to betray all its laws. What have you not done for Hanover? Do you command at Hanover? All the republics of Greece were bound together by mutual services; but did any one exact, as a mark of gratitude, the right of disposing of the government of the succoured state?

*Our honour is engaged*——Say, that of your bad ministers, and not your's. In what consists the true honour of him who has been mistaken? Is it to persist in his error, or to acknowledge it? Has he who returns to a sense of justice, any cause to blush? Englishmen, you have been too hasty. Why did you not wait, till the Americans had been corrupted, as you are, by riches? Then, they would have thought no more highly of their liberty, than you do of your own. Then it would have been needless to take arms, against men subdued by opulence. But what instant have you chosen for attacking them? That in which what they had to lose, their liberty, could not be balanced by what they had to keep.

*But later they would be more numerous*——I agree, they would. What then have you attempted? the enslaving a people who shall be unfettered in spite of you by time. In twenty, in thirty years, the remembrance of your atrocious deeds will still be fresh; and the fruit of them will be ravished from you. Then, there will remain to you but remorse and shame. There is a decree of nature which you shall not change;  
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which



which is, that great bodies give laws to little ones. But, tell me, if the Americans should then undertake against Great-Britain, what you have now undertaken against them, what would you say? Precisely what they at this moment say to you. Why should motives which affect you so little in their mouths, appear to you more solid in your own?

*They will not obey our parliament, nor adopt our ordinances—*Did they make them? Can they change them?

*We obey them readily enough, without having had, in time past, or having in the present, any influence over them—*That is to say, that you are slaves; and that you cannot bear that men should be free. However, do not confound the situation of the Americans with your own. You have representatives, and they have not. You have voices which speak for you, and no person stipulates for them. If indeed these voices are bought and sold, it is an excellent reason for their disdaining such a frivolous advantage.

*They wish to be independent of us—*Are not you so of them?

*They will never be able to support themselves without us—*If that be so, be quiet. Necessity will bring them back.

*And if we should not be able to subsist without them—*It would be a great misfortune: but to cut their throats in order to get out of it, is a singular expedient.

*It is for their interest, it is for their good, that we are severe with them, as one is severe with frantic children—*

Their interest! Their good! And who made you judges of these two objects which so nearly touch them, and which they should better know than you? If it should happen, that a man should make a forcible entry into another's house, because, forsooth, he is a man of great sense, and nobody more able to maintain peace and good order for his neighbour, should not one be in the right to humbly beg he would be pleased to take himself away, and to trouble his head about his own affairs? And if the affairs of this officious hypocrite should be very badly ordered? If he should be at  
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the bottom but an ambitious mortal, who, under the pretence of settling and ordering, should have a violent inclination to usurp? If he should cover with the mask of benevolence, but views full of injustice, such, for example, as to get himself out of straits and difficulties at his neighbour's cost?

*We are the mother-country*——What, always the most holy names to serve as a veil to interest and ambition! The mother-country! Fulfill the duties of it then. Besides, colonies are formed of different nations, amongst which some will grant, others refuse you this appellation; and all will with one voice tell you, There is a time when the authority of parents over their children ceases; and this time is when the children are able to provide for themselves. What term have you fixed for our emancipation? Be candid, and you will allow that you had promised yourselves to be able to hold us in a wardship or minority which should never end. If, indeed, this wardship were not to have turned for us into an insupportable constraint; if our advantage were not for ever to be sacrificed to your's; if we were not to have had a multitude of those minor oppressions, which, together, swell to a bulk most burdensome, to bear from the governors, the judges, the collectors, and the military, whom you send us; if the greatest part of them, at their arrival in our climate, were not to have brought with them, blasted characters, ruined fortunes, rapacious hands, and the insolence of subaltern tyrants, who, tired, in their own country, with obeying laws, come to requite themselves, in a new world, by the exercise of an arbitrary power. You are the mother-country: but so far from encouraging, you fear our progress, bind our hands, and repress and strangle our growing strength. Nature in favouring us deceives your secret wishes; or rather, you would chuse, that we should remain in an eternal childhood, with regard to all that can be useful to ourselves, and that, notwithstanding, we should be robust vassals, to be employed in your service, and in the furnishing, without remission, new sources of



riches to your insatiable avidity. Is it this then to be a mother? Is it this to be a country to her children? Ah, in the forests which surround us, nature has given a gentler instinct to the savage beast, which, become a mother, devours not at least those which she has produced.

*Were all their pretensions to be acquiesced in, they would soon be happier than we are. And why not? If you are corrupted, is it necessary that they must be corrupted too? If you have a disposition to slavery, must they too follow your example? If they had you for masters, why should you not confer the property of their country upon another power, upon your sovereign? Why should you not render him their despot, as you have by a solemn act declared him the despot of Canada? Would it then be necessary that they should ratify this extravagant concession? And even if they should have ratified it, must they obey the sovereign whom you should have given them, and, if he commanded it, take arms against you? The King of England has a negative power. No law can be promulgated without his consent. Why should the Americans grant him, in their country, a power, of the inconvenience of which you are continually made sensible? Should it be, in order one day to divest him of it, sword in hand, as it will happen to you, if your government be perfected? What advantage do you find in subjecting them to a vicious constitution?*

*Vicious or not, this is our constitution; and it ought to be generally acknowledged and received, by all who bear the English name; without which, each of our provinces governing itself in its own way, having its own laws, and pretending to independence, we cease to form a national body, and are no more than a heap of little republics, detached, divided, continually rising against one another, and easily to be usurped by a common enemy. The adroit and powerful Philip, capable of attempting such an enterprise, is at our door.*

If he is at your door, he is far from the Americans. A privilege which may have some inconvenience with regard



regard to you, is not the less a privilege. But separated, as they are, from Great Britain by immense seas, of what importance is it to you, whether your colonies receive, or reject, your constitution? What does that make, for, or against, your power; for, or against your safety? This unity, of which you exaggerate the advantages, is still but a vain pretext. You object your laws to your colonies, when they are harassed by them; and you tread them under foot, when they make in their favour. You tax yourselves, and you would tax them. If the least attempt is made upon this privilege, you make a furious outcry, fly to arms, and are ready to run on swords in its defence; and yet, you hold a dagger to the breast of your countryman, to oblige him to renounce it. Your ports are open to all the world; and you shut up the ports of your colonists. Your merchandize is wasted where you please; and their's must necessarily come to you. You manufacture, and you will not suffer them to manufacture. They have skins, they have iron; and they must deliver up to you, unwrought, this iron and these skins. What you acquire at a low price, they must buy of you at the price which your rapacity imposes. You offer them up as victims to your traders; and because your India Company was in danger, the Americans must needs repair their losses. And yet you call them your countrymen and fellow-citizens; and it is thus that you invite them to receive your constitution? Go to, go to. This unity, this league which seems so necessary to you, is but that of the silly animals in the fable, amongst which you have reserved to yourselves the lion's part.

Perhaps you have not suffered yourselves to be drawn to the filling the new world with blood and devastation but by a false point of honour. We wish to persuade ourselves that so many crimes have not been the consequences of a project deliberately formed. You had been told, that the Americans were but a vile herd of cowards, whom the least threat would bring, terrified and trembling, to acquiesce in whatever it should please



please you to exact. Instead of the cowards which had been described and promised you, you find true men, true Englishmen, countrymen worthy of yourselves. Is this a reason for your being irritated? What! your ancestors admired the Hollander shaking off the Spanish yoke; and should you, their descendants, be angry or surprized, that your countrymen, your brethren, that they who feel your blood circulate in their veins, should rather pour it on the ground and die, than live in yokes and bondage? A stranger, upon whom you should have formed the same pretensions, would have disarmed you, if, shewing you his naked breast, he said, *Plunge in your poignard here, or leave me free*: and yet you stab your brother; and you stab him without remorse, because he is your brother! Englishmen! what can be more ignominious than the savageness of a man, proud of his own liberty, and wickedly attempting to destroy the liberty of another! Would you have us believe, that the greatest enemy to freedom is the man that is free? Alas! we are but too much inclined to it. Enemies of kings, you have their arrogance and pride. Enemies of royal prerogative, you carry it every where. Every where you shew yourselves tyrants. Well then, tyrants of nations, and of your colonies, if in the event you prove the strongest, it will be because heaven is deaf to the prayers which are directed to it from all the countries upon earth.

Since the seas have not swallowed up your blustering ruffians, tell me, what will become of them, if there should arise in the new world a man of eloquence, promising eternal happiness to the martyrs of liberty who die in arms. Americans! let your preachers be seen incessantly in their pulpits, with crowns of glory in their hands, pointing to heaven open. Priests of the new world, now is the time for it; expiate the detestable fanaticism, which once laid waste America, by the happy fanaticism, begotten by policy upon freedom. No; you will not deceive your countrymen. To God, who is the principle of justice and  
of



of order, tyrants are abomination. God has imprinted on the heart of man this sacred love of liberty ; he wills not that slavery disfigure and debase his noblest work. If deification be due to man, it is, undoubtedly, to that man who fights and dies for his native soil. Put his image in your temples ; set it on your altars. It shall be worshiped by his country. Form a political and religious calender, marking each day by the name of some hero, who shall have spilled his blood to set you free. Your posterity shall one day read them with holy joy : these, shall it say, behold, these were the men who gave liberty to half a world ; and who, charging themselves with our happiness, before we had existence, secured our infant slumbers from the being disturbed and terrified by the clank of chains.

When the cause of your colonies was argued in your houses of parliament, we heard some excellent pleadings pronounced in their favour. But that which should have been addressed to you perhaps is this :

“ I shall not talk to you, my lords and gentlemen,  
 “ of the justice or injustice of your pretensions. I  
 “ am not such a stranger to public affairs as not to  
 “ know that this preliminary discussion, so sacred in  
 “ all the other circumstances of life, would be mis-  
 “ placed and ridiculous in this. I shall not examine  
 “ what hope you can have of succeeding, or if you are  
 “ likely to prove the strongest in the event, tho’ this  
 “ subject might, perhaps, appear to you of some im-  
 “ portance, and might, probably, insure me the ho-  
 “ nour of your attention. I will do more. I shall  
 “ not compare the advantages of your situation, if  
 “ you succeed, with the consequences which will fol-  
 “ low, if you are unfortunate. I shall not ask you  
 “ how long you are determined to serve the cause of  
 “ your enemies. But I will suppose at once, that  
 “ you have reduced your colonies to the degree of  
 “ servitude which you have authoritatively required.  
 “ Shew me only how you will fix and keep them.  
 “ By a standing army ? But will this army, which  
 will



“ will drain you of men and money, keep pace, or  
 “ not keep pace, with the increase of population?  
 “ There are but two answers to my question; and,  
 “ of these two answers, one seems to be absurd, and  
 “ the other brings you back to the point at which  
 “ you are. I have reflected on it well; and I have  
 “ discovered, if I am not mistaken, the only rational  
 “ and certain plan which you have to follow. And  
 “ it is, as soon as you shall be the masters, to stop  
 “ the progress of population, since it appears to you  
 “ more advantageous, more honourable, and more  
 “ becoming, to domineer over a small number of  
 “ slaves, than to have a nation of freemen for your  
 “ equals and your friends.

“ But you will ask me, how is the progress of po-  
 “ pulation to be stopped? The expedient might re-  
 “ volt weak minds, and cowardly souls; but happily  
 “ there are not any such in this august assembly. It  
 “ is, to stab without pity the greatest part of these  
 “ vile rebels, and to reduce the rest of them to the  
 “ condition of the negroes. The high-spirited and  
 “ generous Spartans, so extolled in ancient and mo-  
 “ dern story, have set you the example. Like them,  
 “ and with their faces muffled in their cloaks, shall  
 “ our fellow-citizens, and the bravoes in our pay,  
 “ go clandestinely, and by night, to massacre the  
 “ children of our Helots, at their father’s side, and  
 “ on their mother’s breast; and leave alive but such  
 “ a number of them, as may be sufficient for their  
 “ labours, and consistent with our safety.”

Englishmen! you shudder at this horrible proposi-  
 tion, and you ask what part there is to take. Van-  
 quishers, or vanquished, see here then what you ought  
 to do. If the resentment, excited by your cruelties,  
 can be calmed; if the Americans can shut their eyes  
 to the devastation which surrounds them; if, in pas-  
 sing over the ruins of their towns destroyed by fire,  
 and their fields whitened by the bones of murdered  
 relatives; if, in drawing in with every respiration the  
 scent of the blood which your hands have on all sides  
 shed.



died, they can forget the outrages of your despotism ;  
 if they can prevail upon themselves to place the least  
 confidence in your declarations of contrition, and to  
 believe that you have indeed renounced the injustice  
 of your pretensions, begin by recalling your merce-  
 nary cut-throats. Restore freedom to their ports,  
 which you keep shut up ; withdraw your squadrons  
 from their coasts ; and, if there be a wise citizen a-  
 mongst you, let him take the olive-branch in his hand,  
 present himself, and say,

“ O you, our countrymen, and our old friends ;  
 “ allow us this title ; we have profaned it, but our  
 “ repentance renders us worthy to resume it, and we  
 “ aspire henceforward at the glory to preserve it.  
 “ We confess, in the presence of this heaven, and of  
 “ this earth, which have been conscious of it, we  
 “ confess, that our pretensions have been unjust, our  
 “ conduct has been cruel. Let it on each side be  
 “ forgotten. Raise up again your fortresses and your  
 “ ramparts. Re-assemble in your peaceable habitati-  
 “ ons. Let us wash out the remembrance of every  
 “ drop of blood that has been spilled. We admire  
 “ the generous spirit by which you have been directed.  
 “ It is the same with that to which, in similar cir-  
 “ cumstances, we have been indebted for our poli-  
 “ tical salvation. Yes, it is by these marks, ex-  
 “ pressly, that we now know you to be indeed our  
 “ countrymen ; to be indeed our brothers ; con-  
 “ cerning whom we have verily been guilty ; and  
 “ therefore is this distress come upon us. You  
 “ would be free ; be ye free. Be so, in the whole  
 “ extent which we have ourselves given to this sacred  
 “ name. It is not of us that you hold this right.  
 “ Not unto us, not unto us, doth belong the power,  
 “ by which it is to be given, or taken away. You  
 “ have received it, as we did, from nature, which  
 “ the fins and swords of tyrants may oppose, but  
 “ which the fins and swords of tyrants cannot destroy.  
 “ We lay claim to no sort of superiority over you.  
 “ We aspire but at the honour of equality. This  
 F “ glory



“ glory is sufficient for us. We know too well the  
 “ inestimable value of governing ourselves, to wish  
 “ henceforward that you should be divested of the  
 “ boon.

“ If, supreme masters and arbiters of your legisla-  
 “ tion, you can create for your states a better go-  
 “ vernment than our's, we give you anticipated joy.  
 “ Your happiness will inspire us with no other sen-  
 “ timent, than the desire of imitation. Form for  
 “ yourselves constitutions adapted to your climate,  
 “ to your soil, to this new world you civilize. Who  
 “ better than yourselves can know your peculiar  
 “ wants? High-spirited and virtuous minds, like  
 “ your's, should obey but the laws which shall be giv-  
 “ en them by themselves. All other restraint would  
 “ be unworthy of them. Regulate your own taxati-  
 “ on. We desire you only to conform yourselves to  
 “ our custom in the assessment of the duties. We  
 “ will present to you a state of our wants; and you  
 “ will of yourselves assign the just proportion between  
 “ your succours and your riches.

“ Moreover, exercise your industry, like us; with-  
 “ out limitation exercise it. Avail yourselves of the  
 “ benefits of nature, and of the fruitful countries you  
 “ inhabit. Let the iron of your mines, the wool  
 “ of your flocks, the skins of the savage animals  
 “ which wander in your woods, fashioned in your  
 “ manufactures, take a new value from your hands.  
 “ Be your ports free. Go, and expose to sale the  
 “ productions of your lands, and of your arts, in all  
 “ the quarters of the world. Go, and seek for those  
 “ of which you stand in need. It is one of our privi-  
 “ leges, let it be likewise your's. The empire of the  
 “ ocean, which we have acquired by two ages of  
 “ greatness and glory, belongs as well to you as us.  
 “ We shall be united by the ties of commerce. You  
 “ will bring us your productions, which we shall re-  
 “ ceive in preference to those of all other people, and  
 “ we hope that you will prefer our's to those of fo-  
 “ reigners, without being restrained to it however by  
 “ any



“ any law, but that of the common interest, and the  
“ fair claims of countrymen and friends.

“ Let the ships of your country and of our's, adorned by the same streamer, overspread the seas;  
“ and let shouts of joy arise on each side, when sister-vessels meet each other in the deserts of the ocean.  
“ Let peace spring up again between us, and concord last for ever. We are sensible at length, that the  
“ chain of mutual benevolence is the only one, which  
“ can bind such distant empires together, and that  
“ every other principle of unity would be precarious  
“ and unjust.

“ Upon this new plan of eternal amity, let agriculture, industry, laws, arts, and the first of all  
“ sciences, that of procuring the greatest good to  
“ communities and individuals, be perfected amongst  
“ you. Let the recital of your happiness call around you all the unfortunate of the earth. Let  
“ the tyrants of all countries, let all oppressors,  
“ political or sacred, know, that there exists upon  
“ the earth a place, where a deliverance from their  
“ chains is to be found; where afflicted, dejected  
“ humanity has lifted up her head; where harvests  
“ grow for the poor; where laws are no more than  
“ the security of happiness; where religion is free,  
“ and conscience has ceased to be a slave; where, in  
“ short, nature seems to put in her plea of justification, for having created man; and government, so  
“ long time guilty, over all the earth, makes at last  
“ the reparation of its crimes. Let the idea of such  
“ an asylum serve as a terror and restraint to despots:  
“ for if they have no kindness about their hearts, and  
“ look with indifference on the happiness of man,  
“ they have at least much avarice and ambition, which  
“ must make them anxious to preserve both their  
“ riches and their power.

“ We ourselves, O countrymen, O friends, we  
“ ourselves shall profit by your example. If our constitution should be altered for the worse; if public  
“ riches should corrupt the court, and the court the



nation ; if our kings, to whom we have given so  
 many terrible examples, should at last forget them ;  
 if we should be in danger, we who were an august  
 people, of dwindling to a vile herd of abjects, by  
 basely setting ourselves to sale ; we might be re-  
 animated by the sight of your virtues and your  
 laws. It might recall to our depraved and dastard  
 hearts, with a sense of the value and the grandeur  
 of liberty, the energy to preserve it. But if it must  
 be, that such an example as your's shall want power  
 to prompt us ; if it must be, that slavery, the never-  
 failing follower of venality, shall be, one day, esta-  
 blished in that land, which has been inundated with  
 blood in the cause of freedom, which has seen scaf-  
 folds erected for the punishment of tyrants ; then  
 will we emigrate like your fathers, then will we a-  
 bandon, in a body, the ungrateful isle, delivered up  
 to a despot, and leave the monster, to reign and roar,  
 in a desert, for domain. Then shall you surely  
 welcome us as friends, as brothers. You will suffer  
 us to partake with you of this soil, of this air,  
 free as the generous souls of their inhabitants, and,  
 thanks to your virtues, we shall find again an Eng-  
 land, again a country.

Such, brave countrymen, are our hopes, such  
 our wishes. Receive then our oaths, pledges of so  
 holy an alliance. Let us invoke, to still add so-  
 lemnity to the treaty, let us invoke our common  
 ancestors, who were all animated by the spirit of  
 liberty like you, and did not dread to die in its  
 defence. Let us call to witness, the memory of  
 the illustrious founders of your colonies, that of  
 your august legislators, of the philosophic Locke,  
 the first man upon the earth who made a code of to-  
 leration, of the venerable Penn, the first who founded  
 a city of brethren. The spirits of these great men,  
 who surely at this moment are beholding us with  
 earnestness and with pleasure, are worthy to pre-  
 side at a treaty, which is about to draw the blef-  
 sings of peace upon a double-world. Swear we,

in



“ in their presence ; swear we, upon the very arms,  
 “ with which you have so valiantly withstood us ;  
 “ swear we, to remain for ever united, and for ever  
 “ true ; and when the oath of peace shall have been  
 “ pronounced by all, make, of these same arms, a  
 “ sacred deposite in some hallowed pile, where the  
 “ father’s shall shew them to the generations as they  
 “ rise ; and there keep them carefully from age to  
 “ age, in order to their being, one day, turned a-  
 “ gainst the first, be he English or American, who  
 “ shall dare propose the rupture of that alliance, which  
 “ is equally useful, equally honourable to both the  
 “ names.”

At this discourse, I hear the towns, the villages,  
 the fields, all the shores of North-America resound,  
 with liveliest acclamation, with tenderest repetition of  
 the endearing names of brother and of mother, ap-  
 plied to your country and her sons. And whilst the  
 conflagrations of war are succeeded by bonfires and  
 sports, and every demonstration of a heart-felt tri-  
 umphant joy, I see the nations, envious of your power,  
 to stand aghast, in silence, astonishment, despair.

Your parliament is about to meet. What is to be  
 expected from it ? Will it listen to reason, or will it  
 persevere in its madness ? Will it be the defender of  
 the rights of nations, or the instrument of the tyran-  
 ny of ministers ? Will its acts be the decrees of a free  
 people, or edicts dictated by the court ? I am present  
 at the deliberations of your houses. In these revered  
 resorts I hear wisdom speak by the mouth of mode-  
 ration. Soft persuasion seems to flow there, from the  
 lips of most distinguished orators. My heart is filled  
 with hope : my eyes over-run with tears. Presently  
 a voice, the organ of despotism and of war, suspends  
 the delicious, sweet emotion.

“ Englishmen, cries a mad haranguer, can you he-  
 “ sitate a moment ? It is your rights, it is your most  
 “ important interests, it is the glory of your name,  
 “ that you are called upon to defend. It is not a fo-  
 “ reign power which attacks these essential objects.  
 “ They



" They are menaced by an interior, domestic enemy.  
 " The danger therefore is more imminent, the out-  
 " rage the more sensible.  
 " Between two rival powers, armed for mutual  
 " pretensions, policy may sometimes suspend hostilities.  
 " Against rebel subjects, slackness is the greatest fault,  
 " and all moderation weakness. The standard of revolt,  
 " which was set up by audacity, should be torn down  
 " by power. Let the sword of justice fall heavy on  
 " the hands which dared display it. Let us be expe-  
 " ditious. In these cases there is a first moment  
 " which must be seized on; revolutions should be  
 " strangled in their birth. Give not to minds, yet  
 " in amazement, time to grow familiar with their  
 " guilt; to the ringleaders, time to confirm their pow-  
 " er; nor to the people, that of learning to obey  
 " new masters. The people in a revolt, are almost  
 " always actuated by alien impulses. Neither their  
 " fury, nor their hatred, nor their love, are properly  
 " their own. You may give them passions, as easily  
 " as arms. Display to their eyes, the power and  
 " majesty of the British empire: they will presently  
 " be falling at your feet; and go in an instant from  
 " terror to compunction, from compunction to obedi-  
 " ence. If we must have recourse to the severity of  
 " arms, let us have no scruples. In civil war, pity  
 " is a most mistaken virtue. When the sword is once  
 " drawn, it ought not to be stayed, but by submissi-  
 " on. It is for them to answer now, to heaven and  
 " to earth, for the evils which they bring upon them-  
 " selves. Consider that a transient severity, in these  
 " rebellious countries, will insure us peace and obe-  
 " dience that will last for ages.  
 " In order to make us suspend our blows, and dis-  
 " arm our hands, we have been told, and told re-  
 " peatedly, that the land is peopled by our country-  
 " men, by our friends, by our brethren. What, in-  
 " voke in their favour names which they have out-  
 " raged, bands which they have broken? These names,  
 " these bands, so sacred, are the very thing that ac-  
 " cuses



“ causes and attainments them. Since when, were these  
 “ revered titles to impose duties but on us? Since  
 “ when, had rebellious children the right to take  
 “ arms against their mother, despoil her of her heri-  
 “ tage, and rend her heart? They talk of liberty :  
 “ I respect this name as much as they do ; but by this  
 “ liberty, is it independence, that we are to understand ?  
 “ Is it the right, to overturn a legislation, founded and  
 “ established two ages since ? Is it the right, to usurp  
 “ all those which we possess ? They talk of liberty,  
 “ but I talk, and will always talk, of the suprema-  
 “ cy, and the sovereign power, of Britain.  
 “ What, supposing they had some causes of com-  
 “ plaint, supposing they intended to refuse bearing  
 “ some light portion of the heavy burden under which  
 “ we stagger, to refuse unreasonably to make them-  
 “ selves partners in our expences, as we have made  
 “ them partners in our greatness, had they no other  
 “ way to do it, than by revolt and arms ? There are  
 “ those who call them our countrymen, and our  
 “ friends ; but, for my part, I can see them in no  
 “ other light than that of the most cruel persecutors  
 “ and enemies of our country. We had common fa-  
 “ thers, it is said ; and so, undoubtedly, we had :  
 “ but these respectable ancestors I myself with confi-  
 “ dence invoke. If their spirits could here resume  
 “ their places, their indignation would not be inferi-  
 “ or to our own. With what wrath would these vir-  
 “ tuous citizens then understand, that those of their  
 “ children who went to fix themselves beyond the seas,  
 “ no sooner began to be a little conscious of their  
 “ strength, than they made a traitorous trial of it a-  
 “ gainst their country ; armed themselves against her  
 “ with the very benefits her bounty had bestowed ?  
 “ Yes, all ; even to that pacific sect, enjoined strictly  
 “ by their founder never to dip their hands in blood ;  
 “ they, who have respected the lives and the rights  
 “ of savage people ; they, who by an enthusiasm of  
 “ humanity, have struck off the fetters from their  
 “ slaves : now, equally faithless to their country and  
 “ their



“ their religion, they arm their hands for slaughter;  
 “ and it is against you. They treat all men as bre-  
 “ thren; and you, you only, of all people, are ex-  
 “ cluded from the title. They have shewn the world  
 “ that the savages of America, that the negroes of  
 “ Africa, are henceforward less alien to them than  
 “ the citizens of Britain.

“ Arm, then, arm. Britons, strike home; re-  
 “ venge, revenge, your country's wrongs, your of-  
 “ fended rights. Revenge the treason to your great-  
 “ ness. Display that power, so redoubtable in Eu-  
 “ rope, in Africa, and the Indies; which has so often  
 “ astonished America herself; and since, between a  
 “ sovereign-people and the subject-people who revolt,  
 “ there can be no treaty now, but force, let force  
 “ decide. Snatch opportunely at this world, which  
 “ is falling from you, and resume it; it is your pro-  
 “ perty, which ingratitude and insolence would ra-  
 “ vish from you.”

The sophisms of a fretting, strutting speechifier, upheld by royal power and national pride, suppress, in the majority of the representatives of the people, the desire of pacific measures. New resolutions resemble those which begot them; but with aggravated features of ferocity and despotism. Levies of troops, equipments of fleets. Admirals and generals set sail for the new world, with orders and projects sanguinary and savage. Nothing less than unconditional submission can restrain or retard the devastation ordained against the colonies.

Until this memorable period, the Americans had confined themselves to a resistance, authorized even by the English laws. No other ambition appeared in them, than that of maintaining the very limited rights which they had hitherto enjoyed. Even the leading men amongst them, who might be supposed to have more enlarged ideas, had not yet ventured to speak to the multitude of any thing but an advantageous accommodation. They would have been afraid, in going further, of losing the confidence of people at-  
 attached



tached by habit to an empire, under whose wings they had prospered. The accounts of the great preparations which were making in the old world, with fetters to confine, or with fire to consume, the new, extinguished all remains of affection for the original government. The only business now, was to give energy to minds ready to receive it. This was the effect which a work, entitled "*Common Sense*," produced. We shall give here the sum and substance of its doctrine, without tying ourselves down to its exact form and order.

Never, says the author of this celebrated performance, never did a more grand concernment call for the attention of the world. It is not that of a city or a province, it is that of an immense continent, and of a considerable portion of the globe. It is not the affair of a day, it is that of ages. The present is about to decide upon a long futurity; and many hundreds of years after that we shall be no more, the sun, in illuminating this hemisphere, will illuminate our glory, or expose our shame. A long time did we speak of peace and reconciliation: all is changed. On the day when, in consequence of the recourse which has been had to arms, the first drop of blood was shed, time for disquisition passed away. A day has given birth to a revolution. A day has transported us to another age.

Timid souls, souls who measure the future by the past, think that we stand in need of the protection of England. That protection might be useful to a rising colony; it is become dangerous for a nation formed. Infancy must needs be supported, in its weak endeavours to walk; youth should march actively and freely, in power and pride of port. The nation, as well as the man, who may have the power and right to protect me, may have the power and will to oppress me. I give up the support of a protector, to be secured from the fear of a master.

In Europe, the people are too much agitated to allow to this part of the world the enjoyment of con-



stant peace. In those courts and nations interests meet interests, and jostle without end. As friends of England we must necessarily have all her enemies for our own. This alliance will entail upon America the dower of perpetual war. Let us part, let us part. Neutrality, trade and peace; such, and such only, can be the foundations of our greatness.

The authority of Great-Britain over America must sooner or later be extinct. So wills nature, necessity, and time. The English government can, therefore, give us only a transient constitution; and we shall bequeath to our posterity but debts, and dissensions, and a precarious state. If we would insure their happiness, let us part. If we are fathers, if we love our children, let us part. Laws and liberty are the heritage we owe them.

England is too far removed from us; we cannot be governed by such a distant country. What, to traverse, always, two thousand leagues, to claim justice, or to ask for laws! to exculpate ourselves from imaginary crimes, or solicit, with meanness, the court and ministers of a foreign clime! What, to wait for years for every answer; and to find, as we might too often, when we had crossed and recrossed the ocean, that injustice only would be the product of our voyage! No; to be a great state, the centre and the seat of power must be in the state itself. Nothing but the despotism of the East can inure men thus to receive their laws from rulers far remote, or from the bashaws, by whom invisible tyrants are represented. But let it not be forgotten, that the more the distance is augmented, the more ponderous and cruel is the pressure of the despotic power; and the people then, deprived of almost all the advantages of government, feel only its miseries and its vices.

Nature did not create a world to subject it to the inhabitants of an island. Nature has established the laws of equilibrium, which she every where observes, in the heavens as well as upon the earth. By the laws of bodies, and of distances, America can belong but to itself. There



There is no government without a mutual confidence between him who commands and him who obeys. It is all over; this mutual confidence is gone, and never can return. England has too clearly shewn that she would command us like slaves; America, that she was equally sensible both of her rights and of her strength. They have each betrayed their secret. From this moment there can be no further treaty. It would be signed by hatred and distrust; hatred, which never pardons; distrust, which, by its very nature, can never be reconciled.

Would you know what an accommodation would produce? Your ruin. You stand in need of laws; you will not obtain them. Who would give them to you? The English nation? She is jealous of your increase. The ? He is your enemy. Yourself, in your assemblies? Do you not remember that all legislation is submitted to the negative right of the monarch who would bring you to his yoke? This right would be a formidable right incessantly armed against you. Make requests; they will be eluded. Form plans of commerce and greatness; they will become to the mother-country an object of affright. Your government will be no more than a kind of clandestine war; that of an enemy who would destroy without openly attacking; it will be, according to the ordinary course of policy, a slow and secret assassination, which will cause langour and prolong weakness, and, with the art of an imperial torturer, equally prohibit you to live or die. Submit to England; and behold your fate.

It is not without right that we take arms. Our right is necessity, a just defence, the miseries of ourselves and of our children, the excesses committed against us. Our right is our august title of nation. It is for the sword to judge us. The tribunal of war, is the only tribunal which now exists for us. Well then, since the sword must necessarily be drawn, let us be sure at least, that it be for a cause that may be worthy of it, and requite us for both our treasure and our blood.



blood. What, shall we expose ourselves to the seeing our habitations ruined, our lands laid waste, our families slaughtered, in order to compass at last an accommodation; that is, to implore new chains, and cement ourselves the edifice of our bondage? What, shall it be by the dreadful light of conflagrations, shall it be on the tomb of our fathers, or our children, or our wives, that we shall sign a treaty with our proud oppressors! and, all covered with our blood, will they deign to pardon us! Ah, we should then be but a vile object of pitying wonder to Europe, of indignation to America, and of contempt even to our enemies. If we can obey them, we had not the right to combat them. Liberty only can absolve us. Liberty, and perfect liberty, is the only object worthy of our labours and our dangers. What do I say? From this moment it is our own. Our title is written on the bloody plains of Lexington; it was there that the hand of England tore the contract by which we were united to her. Yes. At the moment when the report of the first musquet discharged by England was heard, nature herself proclaimed us free and independent.

Let us profit by the benefit of foes. The youth of nations is the age most favourable to their independence. It is the time of energy and vigour. Our souls are not yet surrounded by that apparatus of luxury, which serves as hostage to a tyrant. Our arms are not yet enervated in the arts of softness. Amongst us are not seen to domineer those nobles, who, by their very constitution, are the necessary allies of kings; who love not liberty, but when they can make of it an instrument of oppression; those nobles, eager for privilege and title, for whom, in critical conjunctures, the people are but tools, for whom the supreme power is a ready corruptor.

Your colonies are formed of plain, brave, laborious, upright men, proprietors and cultivators of their land in one. Liberty is their first want. Rural labours have already hardened them for war. Public enthusiasm



slavery brings to light unknown talents. It is in revolutions that great minds are formed, that heroes shew themselves, and take their place. Remember Holland, and all her sons; and that number of extraordinary men to which the quarrel of her liberty gave birth: behold in these men an example for you; remember their success, and behold a presage.

Let our first step be to form a constitution by which we may be united. The moment is arrived. Later, it would be abandoned to an uncertain futurity and the caprice of chance. The more people and riches we shall acquire, the more barriers will there be raised up between us. Then, how shall so many provinces and interests be made consistent? For such an union, it is necessary that each people should at once be sensible, both of the particular weakness, and the general strength. There must be great calamities or great fears. It is then, amongst communities as amongst individuals, that spring up those firm and vigorous friendships which associate souls with souls, and interests with interests. It is then, that one spirit, breathed from every part, forms the genius of states; and that all the scattered powers become by union a single and a formidable power. Thanks to our persecutors, we are at this epocha. If we have courage, it will be that of our happiness. Few nations have laid hold of the favourable moment to form their government. Once escaped, this moment returns no more; and anarchy or slavery punishes the neglect of it for ages. Let not a similar fault prepare for us similar regret. Regret is impotent.

Let the moment, which, in respect to us, is singular, be seized on. We have it in our power to frame the finest constitution that the world has seen. You have read in your sacred books how mankind were destroyed by the general deluge. A single family survived, and was commanded by the Supreme Being to re-people the earth. We are this family. Despotism has deluged all; and we can a second time renew the world.

We are about, at this moment, to decide the fate  
of



of a race of men more numerous perhaps than all the people of Europe put together. Shall we wait till we may be the prey of a conqueror, and suffer the hope of the universe to be destroyed? Imagine to yourselves, that all the generations of the world to come, have at this moment their eyes fixed on us, and demand of us their liberty. We are about to fix their destiny. If we give them up, they will, perhaps, one day, drag their chains across our tombs, and load them with imprecations.

Call to mind a writing which has appeared amongst you, and had for a motto, **UNITE OR DIE.**

Let us unite then, and begin by declaring our **INDEPENDENCE.** That alone can efface the name of rebellious subjects, which our insolent oppressors have dared to give us. That alone can make us rise up to the dignity which is our due, insure us allies amongst the powers, impress respect even upon our enemies, and, if we treat with them, give us the right to treat, with the power and majesty which becomes a nation.

But I repeat it; we must be quick. Our uncertainty makes our weakness. Let us dare to be free, and we are so. Ready to take the leap, we draw back. We read the countenances of each other with anxious curiosity. It seems, as if we were astonished at our own boldness, and that our very courage gave us fear. But it is not now the time to be musing on calculations. It is passed. In great affairs, in which there is but one great part to take, too much circumspection ceases to be prudence. Every thing that is extreme, demands resolution in the extreme. Then, the boldest measures are the wisest; and the excess of boldness itself becomes the means and the warrant of success.

Such was the substance of the sentiments displayed in this work. They confirmed in their principles the enterprising spirits who had long required a total separation from the mother-country. The timid citizens, who had been wavering till then, now declared decisively for this great and interesting rupture. The  
votaries



votaries of independence were numerous enough to bring the general congress, on the 4th of July, 1776, to the determination to pronounce it.

Why have I not received the genius and the eloquence of the celebrated orators of Athens and of Rome !—With what grandeur, with what enthusiasm, should I not speak of those generous men who erected this grand edifice, by their patience, their wisdom, and their courage ! HANCOCK, FRANKLIN, the two ADAMSES, were the greatest actors in this affecting scene : but they were not the only ones. Posterity shall know them all. Their honoured names shall be transmitted to it by a happier pen than mine. Brass and marble shall shew them to remotest ages. In beholding them, shall the friend of freedom feel his heart palpitate with joy, feel his eyes floating in delicious tears. Under the bust of one of them has been written ; HE WRESTED THUNDER FROM HEAVEN AND THE SCEPTRE FROM TYRANTS\*. Of the last words of this eulogy shall all of them partake.

Heroic country, my advanced age permits me not to visit thee. Never shall I see myself amongst the respectable personages of thy Areopagus ; never shall I be present at the deliberations of thy Congress. I shall die without having seen the retreat of toleration, of manners, of laws, of virtue, and of freedom. My ashes will not be covered by a free and holy earth : but I shall have desired it ; and my last breath shall bear to Heaven an ejaculation for thy prosperity.

Though America might be assured of universal approbation, she thought it incumbent on her to expose to the eyes of the world the motives of her conduct. She published her manifesto, in which we read that,

“ The history of the English nation and its king  
 “ will shew to the succeeding generations, whom it  
 “ shall entertain and instruct with accounts of them  
 “ and

\* “ *Eripuit cælo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis,*” is the line applied to the great Electrician ; and the translator dares not criticise a line which his master has thought worthy to be studied in his work.



“ and us, a series of outrages and of usurpations,  
 “ which vied with each other in their tendency to  
 “ establish absolute tyranny in these provinces.

“ It will shew, that the monarch refused his con-  
 “ sent to laws the most salutary and the most necessa-  
 “ ry to the public good.

“ That he removed the assemblies to inconvenient  
 “ places, at a distance from all records, in order to  
 “ bring the deputies more easily to his views.

“ That he had frequently dissolved the assembly of  
 “ representatives, because they had firmly defended  
 “ the people's rights.

“ That, after such dissolution, he had left the states  
 “ too long without representatives, and consequently  
 “ exposed to the inconveniencies resulting from the  
 “ want of assemblies.

“ That he endeavoured to hinder population, by  
 “ raising difficulties to the naturalization of foreign-  
 “ ers, and by selling the lands, of which he granted  
 “ the property, too dear.

“ That he made the judges too dependent on him-  
 “ self, by decreeing that they should hold but of him  
 “ alone, both their offices and their salaries.

“ That he created new employments, and filled  
 “ this country with a multitude of place-men, who  
 “ devoured our substance and disturbed our quiet.

“ That he maintained amongst us, in time of pro-  
 “ found peace, a considerable number of troops, with-  
 “ out the consent of the legislative power.

“ That he rendered military power independent of,  
 “ and even superior to, the civil power.

“ That he contrived all means, in conjunction with  
 “ perverse men, to quarter armed soldiers in our hou-  
 “ ses, and exempt them from the pains due to the  
 “ murders they might commit in America; to de-  
 “ stroy our trade in all parts of the world; to impose  
 “ taxes on us without our consent; to deprive us, in  
 “ many cases, of our trials by juries; to transport  
 “ us, and make us take our trials, beyond the seas;  
 “ to take away our charters, suppress our best laws,

“ to



to alter the foundation and the form of our government for the worse ; to suspend our own legislation, and make us receive other laws.

That he himself abdicated his government in the American provinces, by declaring us fallen from his protection, and by making war upon us.

That he caused our coasts to be ravaged, our ports to be destroyed, our towns to be burnt, our people to be massacred.

That he forced those who were taken prisoners upon the high seas, to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to perish themselves by hands so dear.

That he excited amongst us intestine divisions ; and that he endeavoured to raise against our peaceable inhabitants, the barbarous savages, accustomed to massacre all, without distinction of rank, sex, and age.

That at this time there arrived on our shores foreign mercenaries, commissioned to compleat the work of devastation and death.

And that a prince, whose character was thus marked by all the features of tyranny, was not fit to govern a free people."

A step which broke the ties formed by blood, by religion, and by habit, was to be supported by a grand concert of wills, by wise and vigorous measures. The United States of America gave themselves a federate constitution, which joined to the interior advantages of republican government, all the power of monarchy.

Each province had an assembly formed by the representatives of the different districts, and in which the legislative power resided. The executive power was committed to its president. His rights and his obligations were, to listen to every application from any of the people ; to call them together when circumstances might require it ; to provide for the arming and subsisting troops, and concert the operations of them with their officers. He was at the head of a secret committee, which was to hold a continual correspondence



respondence with the general congress. The time of his continuance in office was limited to two years. But the laws permitted a prolongation of it.

The provinces were not obliged to render an account of their administration to the great council of the nation, though composed of the deputies of all the colonies. The superiority of the general congress over the particular congresses was confined to matters relative to politics and war.

But some people have thought that the institution of this body was not so well contrived as the legislation of the provinces. It seems, it must be confessed, that federate states, which raise themselves from the condition of subjects up to that of being independent, cannot without danger trust their delegates with the unlimited power of making peace and war. For these delegates, should they be corrupt or ill informed, might bring back the whole state to the bondage which it is seeking to escape from. It seems, that in these times of revolution, the public will cannot be too well known, too literally pronounced. It is necessary, undoubtedly, they say, that all the measures, all the operations, which relate to the common defence and offence, should be decided on by the common representatives of the body of the state: but the continuation of war, and the conditions of peace, ought to be deliberated upon in every province; and the deliberations to be transmitted to the congress by the deputies, who would submit the opinion of their provinces to the plurality of voices. In short, they add, that if in established governments it is proper that the people should rely with confidence in the wisdom of their senate, in a state where the constitution is forming, where the people, as yet uncertain of their fate, call for their liberty, sword in hand, it is necessary that all the citizens should be continually in council, in camp, in the public places, and have their eyes continually open upon the representatives to whom their destiny has been committed.

Though these principles are true in general, there might



might be a difficulty, we may answer, in applying them to the new republic formed by the Americans. It is not with that republic as with the federate republics which we see in Europe, I mean Holland and Switzerland, which occupy a country but of small extent, and in which it is easy to establish a rapid communication between all the provinces. The same thing may be said of the confederacies of ancient Greece. These states were situated at a small distance from each other, confined almost within the narrow compass of the Peloponnesus, or, at most, within the limits of the Archipelago. But the United States of America, dispersed over an immense continent; occupying in the new world a space of almost fifteen degrees; separated by deserts, by mountains, by gulfs, and by a vast extent of coast, cannot have the advantage of this rapid communication. If the general congress could not decide upon political interests without the particular deliberations of each province; if on every important occasion, on every unforeseen event, it should be necessary to give new instructions, and, as we may say, a new power to the representatives, this body would remain inactive. The distances to be passed, the delays and the multitude of debates, might too often be hurtful to the public good.

Besides, it is never at the birth of a constitution, and amidst the great fermentations of liberty, that there is cause to fear that a body of representatives should, either from weakness or corruption, betray the interests with which they are entrusted. It is rather in such a body that the general spirit is both exalted and inflamed. In that resides, in its vigour, the genius of the nation. Chosen by the esteem of their fellow-citizens, chosen at a time when every public function is a danger, and every vote an honour, placed at the head of those who will compose for ever that celebrated Areopagus, and thence even naturally carried to regard the public liberty as their own work, they cannot but have the enthusiasm of founders, who make it their pride to have their names engraved conspicu-



ously, to be read by distant ages, on the frontispiece of an august monument which is rising. The fears which the partisans of the contrary system might have upon this object, seem therefore to have small foundation.

I will say more. It might happen that a people who are fighting for liberty, fatigued with a long and painful struggle, and more struck with the present danger than the future good, might feel their courage failing, and perhaps, one day, be tempted to prefer dependence and peace to independence and tumult, attended with peril and with blood. Then would it be advantageous to this people to have divested themselves of the power of making peace with their oppressors, and deposited it in the hands of the senate which they had chosen to serve as an organ to their will, when this will could shew itself with freedom, pride, and courage. It seems as if each individual, when he had given his voice for the instituting such a senate, should say to it, I raise the standard of war against my tyrants. If my arm should weary in the war, if I could debase myself so low as to implore repose, support me against my weakness. Listen to no prayer or wish unworthy of me, which I disavow beforehand; and pronounce not the name of peace until my bonds be broken.

In reality, if we consult the history of republics, we shall see, that the multitude have almost always great impetuosity and heat at the first moment; but that it is only in a small number of chosen men, and qualified to serve as chiefs, that reside those constant and vigorous resolutions which march, with a steady, firm, undaunted step, towards some great and worthy end, never turning, or looking, from the path, and never ceasing most stubbornly to combat all obstructions that they meet with, from fortune, from misery, and from man.

However it be, and whatsoever side may be taken in this political discussion, the Americans had not yet created for themselves a system of government, when in the month of March, Hopkins plundered the Island  
of



of Providence of a large train of artillery and a considerable quantity of ammunition; when in the beginning of May, Carleton drove out of Canada the Provincial troops, which were employed to reduce Quebec with a view of completing the conquest of that important territory; when in the month of June Clinton and Parker had been so vigorously repulsed on the Southern coasts of America. Far greater scenes followed the declaration of independence.

Howe had been appointed to supersede the feeble Gage: and it was this new general who had evacuated Boston. Having arrived on the 2d of April at Halifax, on the 10th of June he departed for Staten-Island. The forces, which were to act both by sea and land, successively joined him according to expectation; and on the 28th of August he landed on Long-Island without opposition, under the protection of a fleet commanded by the admiral his brother. The Americans exhibited as little spirit in defending the interior part of their country as they did on the landing of the enemy.

After a very feeble resistance, and considerable loss, they took refuge on the continent with a facility which would hardly have been granted them by a conqueror who knew how to avail himself of the advantages he had obtained. The city of New-York too was abandoned by these new republicans with still greater precipitation than they had evacuated Long-Island: and they fled off towards Kingsbridge, where they appeared determined to make an obstinate resistance.

If the English had followed up their success with that vivacity which circumstances demanded, the new-raised troops which had opposed them, had infallibly been dispersed, or reduced to the necessity of laying down their arms. On the contrary, they were allowed six weeks to recover from their consternation: nor did they abandon their intrenchments till the night of the first or second of November, when the movements, which were making in their view, were sufficient.



sufficient to convince them that their camp was upon the point of being attacked.

Their commander in chief, Washington, was unwilling to trust the fate of his country to an action, which might, and naturally would have terminated to the prejudice of those important interests which had been committed to him. He knew, that delays, ever favourable to a native, are ever fatal to a stranger. This conviction determined him to retire to the Jerseys with a design of protracting the war. Favoured both by the inclemency of the season, by his knowledge of the country, and by the nature of the ground, which compensated in some measure for the want of discipline, he had reason to flatter himself, that he should be able to cover the greatest part of this fertile province, and keep the enemy at a distance from Pennsylvania. In a moment, however, he sees his colours abandoned by the soldiers, whose engagement, at the end of six, and even at the end of three months, had expired: and of an army of twenty-five thousand men, there scarce remained two thousand five hundred, with which he was fortunate enough to retire beyond the Delaware.

Without losing a moment, the King's troops ought to have passed the river in pursuit of this handful of fugitives, and have put them totally to the rout. If the five thousand men, destined for the conquest of Rhode-Island, had gone up the river in the transports they were aboard of, the junction of the two corps might have been effected without opposition even in Philadelphia itself, and the new republic had been stifled in that important and celebrated city which gave it birth.

At this time, perhaps, reproaches were cast on the English general for being timid and too circumspect in the operations of the campaign. Certain it is, however, that he was rash enough in the distribution of his winter-cantonments. They were disposed in such a manner, as if there remained not in America a single individual, who had either inclination or power to molest them.

This



This presumption encouraged the militia of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, collected together and re-united for the support of the common cause.

On the 25th of December they crossed the Delaware, and fell accidentally upon Trenton, which was occupied by fifteen hundred of the twelve thousand Hessians, sold in so base a manner, by their avaricious master, to the King of Great-Britain. This corps was massacred, taken, or entirely dispersed. Eight days after three English regiments were in like manner driven from Princeton, but after having better supported their reputation than the foreign troops in their pay.

These unexpected events reduced the enemies of America, in the Jerseys, to the necessity of confining their posts to Amboy and Brunswick, where yet they were exceedingly harassed during the remainder of the winter.

The effect of strong passions, and of great dangers, is often to astonish the mind, and to throw it into that kind of torpor that deprives it of the use of its powers; by degrees it recovers and collects itself: all its faculties, suspended for a moment, display themselves with redoubled vigour: every spring of action is awakened, and it feels its powers rise at once to a level with the difficulties it has to encounter. In a great multitude there are always some who feel this immediate effect, which rapidly communicates itself to others. Such a revolution took place amongst the confederate states. It caused armed men to issue from all quarters.

It was very late before the campaign of 1777 was opened. The English army, in despair of penetrating into Pennsylvania by way of the Jerseys, at last embarked on the 23d of July, and, by the bay of Chesapeake, landed in a country which their generals may very justly be reproached for not having invaded the year before. Their march is uninterrupted, till they reach Brandywine. There, on the 11th of September, they attack and beat the Americans, and arrive on the 30th at Philadelphia, which had been abandoned

on



on the 25th by the Congress, and a few days later or sooner by the greatest number of the inhabitants.

This victory is attended with no consequences. The conqueror sees nothing around him but hatred and devastation. Pent up in a space extremely circumscribed, he meets with insurmountable obstacles in extending himself over an uncultivated country. Even his gold affords him not its usual resources in the neighbouring districts, nor is there a possibility of any supplies, but what must necessarily cross the seas. The irksomeness of an imprisonment of nine months duration, determined him to regain New-York by way of the Jerseys; and under the command of Clinton, successor to Howe, this long and dangerous retreat was effected, without sustaining so much loss as a more experienced enemy would have occasioned.

While the English were wasting away their time in Pennsylvania, an important scene opens itself in the more northern part of America. In the month of May, 1776, Carleton had driven the provincials out of Canada, and in October destroyed the armed sloops which they had constructed on the Lake Champlain. This success drew Burgoyne to Ticonderoga, in the month of July in the following year. At his approach, a garrison consisting of four thousand men, abandoned this important post, with the loss of their rear-guard, their artillery, and ammunition.

The English general was naturally presumptuous. A weakness so extraordinary increased his arrogance. He had conceived the design of re-uniting the troops of Canada with those of New-York by Hudson's-river. This project was bold and great. Had he succeeded he would have cut North-America in two, and, perhaps, have ended the war. But, to have had success, it would have been necessary, that whilst one army was going down, the other should have gone up, the river. Having failed in this idea, Burgoyne ought to have seen, from the very first steps of it, that his enterprise was chimerical. At every march it became more and more so. His communications grew more distant;  
his



his provisions less abundant. The Americans, taking heart again, assembled from all parts round him. At length this unlucky body of men found themselves caught, on the 13th of October, at Saratoga; and nations learned with astonishment, that six thousand of the best disciplined troops of the old hemisphere, had laid down their arms before the husbandmen of the new, conducted by the fortunate Gates. Those who remembered that the Swedes, under Charles the Twelfth, till then invincible, had capitulated before the Russians, yet uncivilized, did not accuse the English troops, but only blamed the imprudence of their general.

This event, so decisive in the opinion of our politicians, was of no greater consequence than that with which other actions, less favourable to the American arms, had been attended. After three years of fighting, massacre, and devastation, the state of things was scarcely changed from what it had been a fortnight after the commencement of hostilities. Let us endeavour to discover the causes of so strange a singularity.

Great Britain, accustomed to storms at home, saw not at first all the danger there might be in the tempest which was rising in her remote possessions. For a long time her troops had been insulted at Boston; an authority, independent of her's, had been formed in the province of Massachusetts. The other colonies were making dispositions to follow this example, had not the administration taken those great objects into their serious consideration. When they were laid before parliament, both houses were filled with clamour; and much declamation followed after much declamation that had gone before. The senate of the nation decreed at last, that the country which was rebellious to its decrees, should by force be made obedient: but this violent resolution was executed with the slowness too frequent in states of freedom.

England thought, in general, that coasts without defence, that countries entirely open, could not resist



fit her fleets and armies. It did not appear to her that this expedition could be of sufficient duration to give time to the peaceful husbandmen of America to learn the art of war. It was forgotten that the climate, the rivers, the defiles, the swamps, the want of provision, in proportion as advances were made into the country, and an infinity of other natural obstructions, militating against a rapid progress in a region three-fourths uncultivated, should have made a part of the calculation.

Success was still more retarded by the influence of moral causes.

Great-Britain is the region of party. Her kings have generally seemed to be well enough convinced of the necessity of leaving public affairs to the management of the prevailing faction, by which they were conducted commonly with intelligence and with vigour, because the principal agents of which it was composed were animated by a common interest. Then, to public spirit, which reigns more in England than in any other government of Europe, was added the power of a faction, and that spirit of party which moves men's minds so powerfully, because it is always the effect of passion. To rid himself of this restraint, George the Third composed his council of detached, unconnected members. This innovation was not attended with any very great inconveniencies, as long as events rolled round in their common course. But as soon as a war with America had complicated a machine, which was not before too simple, it was perceived that it had neither that strength, nor that union, which are so necessary for the execution of great affairs. The wheels, too far asunder, wanted, as we may say, a centre of motion, and a common impulse. They went sluggishly and precipitately, by turns. The administration too much resembled that of an ordinary monarchy, when the principle of action proceeds not from the head of an intelligent and active monarch, who brings together all the springs under his own hand. There was no longer any integrity or  
wholeness



wholeness in what was undertaken, nor was there more of it in what was executed.

A ministry, without harmony and concord, was exposed to the incessantly renewed attacks of a body of enemies, united, close, and firm. Its resolutions, be they what they would, were sure to be combated by reasoning or by ridicule. It was reproached for having been severe with the distant members of the state, as it would have been reproached for having been too tender to them. Even they who in parliament were the most outrageous against the treatment which had been shewn to the Americans; they who most encouraged them to resistance; they who, perhaps, secretly sent them succour, were as averse to their independence as the very ministers whom they laboured, without ceasing, to remove or vilify. Could the opposition have succeeded in disgusting the king with his confidants, or have obtained the sacrifice of them by the cry of the nation, the project of subjugating America had still been followed, but with more dignity, more force, and perhaps with measures better planned. As the reduction of the revolted provinces was not to be their work, they rather wished that this immense part of the British empire might be separated from it, than that it should be re-united by any other hands than theirs.

The activity of the generals repaired not the vice of these contrarieties, and the delays in consequence. They indulged the soldier with too long repose; they employed in meditating, the time for acting; they approached new-raised men with the precaution they would have taken before veteran troops. The English, who have so much impetuosity in party, are of a cool and calm character in other things. They are to be agitated but by violent passions. When this spring is wanting, they move slow enough to count their steps. Then they govern themselves by the temper of their mind, which, in general, if we except the arts of imagination and taste, is, in every thing else, methodical and wise. In war, their valour never loses



fight of principles, or leaves much to chance. Rarely do they leave, either on their flanks, or in their rear, any thing which may give them trouble. This system has its advantages, particularly in a close and narrow country, in a country set thick with strong holds and fortified towns. But in the present circumstances, and upon the vast continent of America, against a people who should not have had time allowed them for their being fortified, or inured to war, the perfection of the art, perhaps, had been to have forgot it, and to substitute, in its stead, the rapid and impetuous march, and the mighty darings which at once astonish, strike, and overcome. It was in the first moments, above all, that it would have been necessary to impress upon the Americans, not the terror of such ravages as affect a people, armed for their liberty, more with indignation than with fear; but that dread which is struck from a superiority of talents and of arms, and which a warlike people, of the old world, should naturally be supposed to carry to the new. The confidence of victory had soon been victory itself. But by too much circumspection, by their too servile attachment to rules and principles, skilful leaders failed of rendering to their country the service it expected from them, and which it was justified in expecting.

The troops, on their side, did not press their commanders to lead them on. They were just come from a country, where the cause which had sent them across the ocean, made no impression. It was, in the eyes of the people, but a broil which could not be of any consequence. They confounded the debates it occasioned in parliament with other debates, often of small importance. It was not talked of; or if some persons entertained themselves with it, they were not more earnest about it than about those pieces of news, which, in great cities, occupy the idleness of every day. The indifference of the nation had communicated itself to the defenders of its rights. They would even have been afraid, perhaps, to gain too decisive advantages over countrymen, who had taken arms but  
to



to keep themselves from chains. In all the monarchies of Europe, the soldier is but an instrument of despotism, and has its disposition. He looks upon himself as belonging to the throne, and not to the country; and a hundred thousand armed men, are but a hundred thousand disciplined and formidable slaves. The habit even of exercising the empire of force, that empire to which all gives way, contributes to extinguish in them every spark of the love of liberty. At length, the military government and subordination, which moves thousands of arms by a single voice, which permits no asking, nor seeing, nor judging, nor thinking; and, at the first signal, makes it a law to kill or die, compleats the work of changing these sentiments into principles, which make what may be called the morals of their state. It is not so in England. The influence of the constitution is so great, that it extends itself even to the troops. There, a man is a citizen before he is a soldier. Public opinion, conforming itself to the constitution, honours one, and lightly regards the other, of these titles. Thus we see by the history of the revolutions and tempests by which that turbulent island has been torn, that the English soldier, though enlisted for life, preserves for political liberty a passion, of which an idea is not easily to be formed in our countries of slaves.

How should the ardour which was wanting in the British troops have animated the Hessians, the Brunswickers, and the other Germans ranking under the same banners, all equally discontented with the princes who had sold them, discontented with the sovereign who had bought them, discontented with the nation which paid their wages, and discontented with their comrades, who treated their mercenariness with contempt? Besides, they had also brothers in the enemy's camp, to whom they dreaded to give death, and from whose hand a wound would have grieved them with a double pain.

The spirit of the English army had been altered too, in consequence of a revolution in the manners of their country,



country, which had taken place about fifteen or eighteen years before. The successes of the last war; the extension which the peace had given to commerce; the great acquisitions made in the East-Indies: all these means of fortune had, without interruption, accumulated in Great-Britain prodigious riches. These riches kindled the desire of new enjoyments. The great went to acquire them in foreign countries, and, above all, in France; and brought home the poison to their country. From the higher conditions, it flowed down into all the classes, even to the lowest. To a character of plainness, simplicity, reserve, and haughtiness, succeeded a taste for exterior shew, for dissipation, gallantry, and what is called politeness. Travellers who had formerly visited this island so renowned, thought themselves in another climate. The contagion had spread to the troops. They carried with them to the new hemisphere the passion which they had contracted in the old, for gaming, for soft accommodation, and good living. In departing from their coast, they should have renounced the superfluities of which they were enamoured. This taste for luxury, this ardour, so much the more violent as it was new, did not encourage them to pursue, into the interior part of the country, an enemy ever ready to plunge into it for shelter. Ye new politicians, who advance with so much confidence, that manners have no influence on the fate of nations, that, with regard to them, the measure of greatness is that of riches; that the pleasures of peace and the voluptuousness of the citizen cannot weaken the effect of those great machines called armies, and of which the European discipline has, according to your account, so perfected the infallible and tremendous operations: you, who to support your opinion, must turn away your eyes from the ashes of Carthage and the ruins of Rome, upon the recital I am making to you, suspend your judgment, and believe it possible that there may be opportunities of success which are lost by luxury. Believe, that, even to courageous troops, independence



on-wants has been often the chief cause of conquest. It is too easy perhaps to brave only death. For nations corrupted by opulence, a severer trial is reserved, that of supporting the loss of their pleasures.

Add to all these reasons, that the means of war seldom arrived, across such a length of sea, in the convenient season for action. Add, that the councils of George the Third were wisely determined to have too much influence in military operations which were to be executed at such a distance from them; and you will know the greatest part of the obstacles by which the ruinous efforts of the mother-country against the freedom of her colonies were opposed.

But how happened it that America did not herself repulse from her shores these Europeans who were bringing to her chains or death?

This new world was defended by regular troops, which at first had been enlisted but for three or six months, and afterwards for three years, or as long as hostilities might continue. It was defended by citizens who took the field only when their particular province was invaded or menaced. Neither this army always on foot, nor this militia casually assembled, had a military turn. They were farmers, traders, lawyers, exercised only in the arts of peace, and conducted to danger by guides, as little versed as their subalterns in the very complicated science of war. In this state of things, what hope could they have of measuring themselves with advantage against veterans in discipline, formed to evolutions, instructed in tactics, and abundantly provided with all the instruments necessary to a vigorous attack, to an obstinate defence?

Enthusiasm alone might have surmounted these difficulties: but did there in reality exist more enthusiasm in the colonies than in the mother-country?

The general opinion in England, was, that the parliament had essentially the right of taxing every country which made a part of the British empire. Perhaps, in the beginning of the troubles, not a hundred individuals were to be found who would have called  
this



this authority in question. Yet no anger was excited by the refusal of the Americans to acknowledge it. No hatred was borne towards them, even after they had taken arms in support of their pretensions. As the labours of the people in the interior part of the kingdom were not affected by it, as the storm murmured but at a distance, every one was peaceably occupied with his business, or gave himself up without disturbance to his pleasures. They all waited for the conclusion of the drama without impatience, as if already certain of what was to be exhibited in the unravelling of the plot.

The ferment must be supposed to have shewn itself at first much greater in the new hemisphere than the old. Is ever the odious name of tyranny, or the grateful sound of independence, pronounced to nations without communicating to them that warmth which produces motion? But did that warmth sustain itself? Had the first vehemence of imagination lasted, must not the repressing of excesses have occupied the attention of the new authority? But so far from having cause to withhold courage, it had cowardice to pursue. It was seen to punish desertion with death, staining the standard of liberty with blood. It was seen to refuse admitting of an exchange of prisoners, for fear of augmenting the inclination of the troops to surrender at the first summons. It was seen reduced to the necessity of erecting tribunals for the prosecution of the generals or their lieutenants who should too easily give up the posts which their vigilance was to guard. It is true, that a hoary patriot, of fourscore years, who was desired to return to his fire side, cried out, *My death will be of use; I shall shield with my body a younger man.* It is true, that Putnam said to a royalist his prisoner, *Return to thy commander, and if he asks thee how many troops I have, tell him, that I have enough; that, even if he should beat them, I should have still enough; and that he will find, in the event, that I have too many for him and for the tyrants whom he serves.* These sentiments were heroic, but they were rare; and they became less common every day. The



The intoxication was never general; and it could be but momentaneous. None of those energetic causes, which have produced so many revolutions upon the globe, existed in North-America. Neither religion nor laws had there been outraged. The blood of martyrs or patriots had not there streamed from scaffolds. Morals had not been there insulted. Manners, customs, habits, no object dear to nations had there been the sport of ridicule. Arbitrary power had not there torn any inhabitant from the arms of his family and his friends, to drag him to a dreary dungeon. Public order had not been there inverted. The principles of administration had not been changed there; and the maxims of government had there always remained the same. The whole question was reduced to the knowing whether the mother-country had, or had not, the right to lay, directly, or indirectly, a slight tax upon the colonies: for the accumulated grievances in the manifesto were valid only in consequence of this leading grievance. This, almost metaphysical, question was scarcely of sufficient importance to cause the multitude to rise, or at least to interest them strongly in a quarrel for which they saw their land deprived of the hands destined to its cultivation, their harvests laid waste, their fields covered with the dead bodies of their kindred, or stained with their own blood. To these calamities, the work of the royal troops upon the coast, were soon added more insupportable ones in the heart of the country.

Never had the restlessness of the courts of London and Versailles disturbed the tranquility of North-America but both these powers brought some of the migratory clans in this part of the new hemisphere to partake in their sanguinary strife. Instructed by experience in the weight which these hordes could add to the scale, the English and the colonists were equally resolved to employ them for their mutual destruction.

Carleton tried, first, to arm these barbarous bands in Canada. "It is the dispute," said they in answer



to his solicitations, “ of a father with his children ;  
 “ we do not think it right for us to enter into this  
 “ domestic squabble.”—“ But if the rebels should  
 “ come to attack this province, would not you help  
 “ us to drive them back ?” —“ Ever since the peace, the  
 “ hatchet of war has been buried forty fathoms deep.”  
 “ —You would certainly find it, if you were to dig  
 “ for it.” —“ The helve of it is rotten, and we cannot  
 “ make any use of it.”

The United States were not more fortunate. “ We  
 “ have heard talk of some differences that have hap-  
 “ pened between Old and New England (said the  
 “ tribe of the Oneidas to their deputies) but we shall  
 “ never take a part in such atrocious divisions. War  
 “ between brethren is a strange and a new thing in  
 “ these regions. Our traditions have left us no ex-  
 “ ample of this nature. Suppress your mad hatred ;  
 “ and may a benevolent sun disperse the black vapour  
 “ in which you are involved !”

The Masphies alone seemed to interest themselves  
 in the cause of the Americans. “ There (said these  
 “ good savages to them) there’s sixteen shillings for  
 “ you. ’Tis all that we have. We thought to have  
 “ bought some rum with it ; we’ll drink water.  
 “ We’ll go a hunting. If any beasts fall by our ar-  
 “ rows, we’ll sell their skins, and bring you the  
 “ money.”

But in time, the very active agents of Great Britain  
 succeeded in conciliating to it many nations of these  
 aborigines. Its interests were preferred to those of  
 its enemies, as well because the remoter distance had  
 prevented the savages from having received so many  
 outrages from it as from their proud neighbours, as  
 because it could and would better pay the services  
 which might be rendered to its cause. Under its  
 banners, these allies, whose characteristic fierceness  
 knew no restraint, did a hundred times more damage  
 to the colonists settled near the mountains, than had  
 been suffered, from the royal troops, by those of their  
 fellow citizens whom a happier destiny had fixed upon  
 the confines of the ocean. These



These calamities attacked but a more or less considerable number of the members of the United States, who soon after were all, collectively, afflicted by an inward hurt.

The metals, which, throughout the whole globe, represent all the objects of commerce, had, in this part of the new world, never been abundant. The small quantity of them which had been seen there, disappeared even at the commencement of hostilities. To these signs, universally agreed upon, were substituted signs peculiar to these provinces. Paper replaced silver and gold. In order to give some dignity to the new pledge, it was adorned with emblems, which might continually remind the people of the greatness of their undertaking, of the inestimable price of liberty, and of the necessity of a perseverance superior to all sufferings. The artifice did not succeed. These ideal riches were rejected. The more the multiplication of them was urged by want, the greater did their depreciation grow. The Congress was indignant at the affronts given to its money, and declared all those to be traitors to their country who should not receive it as they would have received gold itself.

Did not this body know, that prepossessions are no more to be controled than feelings are? Did it not perceive, that in the present crisis every rational man would be afraid of exposing his fortune? Did it not see, that at the beginning of a republic it permitted to itself the exercise of such acts of despotism as are unknown even in the countries which are moulded to, and become familiar with, servitude and oppression? Could it pretend that it did not punish a want of confidence with the pains which would have been scarcely merited by revolt and treason? Of all this was the Congress well aware. But it had no choice of means. Its despised and despicable scraps of paper were actually thirty times below their original value, when more of them were ordered to be made. On the 13th of September, 1779, there was of this paper money, amongst



the public, to the amount of £.35,544,155. The state owed moreover £.8,385,356, without reckoning the particular debts of single provinces.

The people had no amends for this domestic scourge, as it might be called, by an easy communication with all the other parts of the world. Great-Britain had intercepted their navigation with Europe, with the West-Indies, with all the latitudes which their vessels covered. Then, they said to the universe, "It is the English name which makes us odious; we solemnly abjure it. All men are our brethren. We are the friends of all nations. Every flag may, without fear of insult, shew itself upon our coasts, frequent our ports. An invitation, so seducing in appearance, was not complied with." Those states which are truly commercial ones, knowing that North-America had been reduced to contract debts at the epoch even of her greatest prosperity, thought wisely that in her present distress she would be able to pay but very little for what might be carried to her. The French alone, who dare every thing, dared to brave the inconveniences of this new connection. But by the judicious vigilance of Admiral Lord Howe, the greatest part of the ships which they sent out were taken before they arrived at the places of their destination, and the others at their departure from the American coasts. Of many hundreds of vessels which sailed from France, but twenty-five or thirty returned back to it, and even those brought no profit, or very little, to their owners.

A multitude of privations, added to so many other misfortunes, might make the Americans regret their former tranquility, and incline them to an accommodation with England. In vain had the people been bound to the new government by the sacredness of oaths and the influence of religion. In vain had endeavours been used to convince them that it was impossible to treat safely with a country in which one parliament might overturn what should have been established by another. In vain had they been threat-  
ened



ned with the eternal resentment of an exasperated and vindictive enemy. It was possible that these distant troubles might not be balanced by the weight of present evils.

So thought the British ministry, when they sent to the new world public agents, authorized to offer every thing except independence to these very Americans, from whom they had two years before exacted an unconditional submission. It is not improbable but that by this plan of conciliation, a few months sooner, some effect might have been produced. But at the period at which it was proposed by the court of London, it was rejected with disdain, because this measure appeared but as an argument of fear and weakness. The people were already re-assured. The Congress, the generals, the troops, the bold and skillful men who in each colony had possessed themselves of the authority; every thing had recovered its first spirit. This was the effect of a treaty of friendship and commerce between the United States and the court of Versailles, signed the 6th of February, 1778.

If the British ministry had reflected upon it, they would have comprehended that the same delirium which was drawing them to attack their colonies, was reducing them to the necessity of declaring war in the same instant against France. Then prevailed in the councils of this crown the circumspection which must always be inspired by a new reign. Then the finances were still in the confusion into which they had been plunged by a madness of twenty years. Then the decayed condition of the navy was such as filled every citizen with disquiet. Then Spain, already fatigued with her extravagant expedition of Algiers, found herself in embarrassments which would not have permitted her to run to the succour of her ally. And then might England, without rashness, have promised herself success against the most powerful of her enemies, and to intimidate America by victories gained or conquests made near home. The importance that it was of, for this crown to take away from its rebellious subjects



jects the only support of which they might be assured, would have diminished the indignation inspired by a violation of the most solemn treaties.

George the Third saw nothing of all this. The obscure succours which the Court of Versailles sent to the provinces armed for the defence of their rights, did not open his eyes. The dock-yards of France were filling with shipwrights. Her arsenals were filling with artillery. Scarcely was there room remaining in her magazines for more naval stores. Her ports presented the most menacing appearance; and this strange blindness still continued. To awaken the Court of St. James's from its lethargy, it was necessary that Lewis the Sixteenth should signify to it, on the 14th of March, that he had acknowledged the independence of the United States.

This signification was a declaration of war. It was impossible that a nation, more accustomed to give provocation than receive it, could patiently look on, whilst another nation was loosening it's subjects from their bonds of allegiance, and raising them up with much parade to the rank of sovereign powers. All Europe foresaw that two states, in rivalry for ages, were about to tinge the waters of the ocean with their blood, and again play that dreadful game, in which public prosperities will never compensate for particular disasters. They in whom ambition had not extinguished all benevolence for their fellow-creatures, deplored beforehand the calamities, which, in either hemisphere, were ready to fall upon the human race.

The bloody scene, notwithstanding, did not open yet; and this delay gave credulity a ground of hope, that peace would still continue. It was not known that a fleet, which had sailed from Toulon, was commissioned to attack the English in North-America. It was not known that orders had been dispatched from London to drive the French from the East-Indies. Without being initiated in those mysteries of perfidy, which insidious politics are arrived at regarding as great strokes of state, judicious men supposed that hostilities must



must be inevitable, and on the point of taking place, even in our ocean. This event, which had been foreseen, was brought on by the fight of two frigates, on the 17th of June, 1778.

Here our task becomes more and more difficult. Our sole object is to be useful, and to be true. Far be from us that spirit of party which blinds and degrades those who are the conductors, and those who aspire to be the instructors, of mankind. Our wish is for our country; our homage is to justice. We honour virtue, in whatever place, in whatever form, she is seen: the distinctions of condition and of nation cannot estrange us from her; and the man who is just and magnanimous is our countryman over all the world. If in the different events which pass under our eyes, we blame with boldness what appears to us blame-worthy, we seek not the vain and sorry pleasure of casting indiscreet reproach. But we are speaking to nations and to posterity. We ought faithfully to transmit to them what may be influential on the public good. We ought to give them the history of errors, to teach them how they may be shunned. Should we dare to be traitorously wanting to so great a duty, we might, perhaps, flatter the generation which passeth away; but truth and justice, which are eternal, would impeach us to future generations, who would read us with contempt, and pronounce not our name but with disdain. In this long career we should be just to those who still exist, as we have been to those who exist no more. If, amongst the men of power, there are any who are offended at this freedom, let us not fear to tell them, that we are but the organ of a supreme tribunal, which reason is erecting upon a basis that cannot be shaken. There is no longer a government in Europe but should stand in fear of its determinations. Public opinion, which is becoming more and more informed, and which nothing has power to arrest or awe, has its eyes open upon nations and their courts. It penetrates into the cabinets where policy would lie hid. There it judges the de-  
positaries



positaries of power, their weaknesses and their passions ; and, by the empire of genius and knowledge, raises itself, on all sides, above the ministers of kings, to incite or to restrain them. Wo to them who despise or brave it ! This seeming courage is weakness in reality. Wo to them whose talents cannot arm them with a confidence to sustain its look ! Let such, that they may once do justice, at least to themselves, lay down the burden too heavy for their feeble shoulders. They will cease to expose themselves and the nations they pretend to serve.

France began the war with invaluable advantages. The time, the place, the circumstances ; she had chosen all. It was not till after she had, at leisure, made her preparations, till after she had increased her power to the proper pitch, that she shewed herself upon the field of battle. She had to combat but an enemy who was humbled, weakened, and discouraged by domestic feuds. The wishes of other nations were with her, against those imperious masters, or, as they were called, those tyrants of the ocean.

Events seemed to correspond to the desire of Europe. The French officers, who had old humiliations to wipe away, performed brilliant actions, the remembrance of which will be of long duration. Great theoretic knowledge, and unshaken courage, supplied what might be wanting in them from practice and experience. All the single engagements, of ship to ship, did them the highest honour, and most of them terminated to their advantage. The British fleet ran still greater danger than the isolated vessels. It was so roughly treated as to have cause to fear being wholly or partially destroyed ; had not the French fleet, by which it was reduced, off Ushant, to this almost despairing state, been destined, from timid orders, from odious intrigues, from the weakness of its admirals, or from all these motives together, to quit the sea and be the first to make for port.

In the intoxication of this, perhaps, unexpected success, France seemed to lose sight of her dearest interests.



terests. Her principal object should have been to intercept the commerce of her enemies, cutting the double nerve of their strength, their seamen and their wealth, and so sap, at once, the two foundations of English greatness. Nothing was more easy for a power prepared a long while for hostilities, than to intercept fleets of merchantmen, quite unprepared, and very feebly convoyed. This was not done. The immense riches expected by Great-Britain, from all parts of the globe, entered peaceably into her harbours, without suffering the smallest diminution.

The commerce of France, on the contrary, was harassed in both the hemispheres, and every where intercepted. Her colonies saw ravished from them, on their very coasts, subsistences, to welcome which they were reaching out their arms with all the eagerness of want; whilst the mother-country was deprived of four millions sterling, arrived almost in her sight. This reverse was not without a cause. Let us endeavour to discover it.

The French navy had been a long time unsuccessful; and it was to the vice of its constitution that so many misfortunes had been ascribed. Many attempts had been made to modify or change the regulations of it; but these innovations, good or bad, were always repelled with a more or less strongly marked disdain. At length its admirals dictated themselves, in 1776, a disposition, which rendering them absolute masters of the roads or anchoring places, of the arsenals, of the dock-yards, and the magazines, destroyed that mutual inspectorship, which Lewis the Fourteenth thought it was right he should establish, between the military officers and those of the administration. From that time there was no longer any responsibility, regulation, or œconomy in the ports. Every thing there fell into disorder and confusion.

The new plan had an influence that was still more unhappy. Till this period, it was the ministry who had directed the naval operations towards the end aimed at by their politics. This authority passed, perhaps, al-

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most without being perceived, to those who were to execute these operations, which took insensibly a tincture from their prejudices. These prejudices inclined them to think, that it was not in heavily and laboriously convoying the ships of their nation, or in remaining out upon difficult cruizes, to surprize or destroy those of the enemy's nation, that fame was to be acquired. This double duty, therefore, was entirely neglected, or very ill performed, in consequence of the opinion common at Brest, that such a service had nothing noble in it, and led not to any kind of glory.

It must be confessed, that this prejudice is a very odd one, and quite contrary to all the laws of society. What can be supposed to have been the design of states in instituting this military force destined to scour the seas? Was it only to procure promotions for those who command or serve? Only to give them opportunities of exercising a valour useless to every body but themselves? Only to stain red another element with bloody battles? No, undoubtedly. Fleets of war upon the ocean, are what fortresses and ramparts are for inhabitants of cities; what the national armies are for provinces exposed to incursions of the foe. There are some sorts of property attached to the soil; there are others which are created, transported by commerce, and, as they may be called, wandering on the ocean. Both these sorts of property want defenders. Warriors, that is your function. What would be said, if the land forces should refuse to protect the inhabitants of cities, the cultivators of fields, and to drive back the fire threatened to the harvest? Naval officers, you think yourselves debased by convoying and protecting commerce. But if commerce is to be no more protected, what will become of the riches of the state, of which, without doubt, you expect a part, in recompence of your service? What will become of your own property, in the revenue of your land, which commerce and the circulation of wealth chiefly contribute to make fruitful? You think yourselves debased. What, de-  
bated



based in making yourselves useful to your countrymen ! And what are all the orders in the state, to whom government has committed any portion of the public power, but protectors and defenders of your countrymen and their wealth ? Your post is upon the ocean, as that of the magistrate upon the bench, that of the soldier in the camp, and that of the monarch himself upon the throne, where he commands from a higher station but to take a wider survey, and comprize, at one view, all those who stand in need of his protection and defence. Know, that glory is to be gleaned in every field on which a service to your country can be performed. Know, that to preserve is more glorious, as well as more blessed, than to destroy. In ancient Rome there were also admirers of glory. Yet, there, the glory of having saved a single citizen, was preferred to the glory of having slain a host of foes. What, see you not that in saving the commercial ships, you save the fortune of the state ? Yes, your valour is splendid ; it is known to Europe as well as to your country ; but what boots it to your countrymen, that it has been displayed upon occasions of eclat, that it has brought the ship of your enemy in tow, or blown its ruins wide upon the waves, if you have suffered to perish, or be taken, the ships which bear your country's riches ; if, in the very port, which you triumphantly re-enter, a thousand desolate families deplore their fortunes lost ? On your landing, instead of hearing the shouts of victory, you will be received with silence and dejection ; and your exploits will be destined but to swell the recital of a court gazette, and those public papers, which, in amusing idleness, give glory but for a day, when that glory is not graven upon the hearts of your fellow-citizens, by the remembrance of real utility to the common good.

The maxims sacred at Portsmouth were very different. There was felt, there was respected, the dignity of commerce. There, it was both a duty and an honour to defend it ; and events have decided on which side the naval officers had the justest ideas of their function.



Great-Britain had just experienced a very humiliating reverse in the new world, and a more powerful enemy threatened her with greater disasters in the old. This alarming situation filled all minds with doubtfulness and distrust. The national riches arrive. Those of the rival power add to the enormous mass; and instantly public credit is re-animated; hope springs up again, and this people, who were contemptuously thought to be brought down, resume, and sustain, their usual prowess and their usual pride.

The ports of France, on the contrary, are filled with groans. A shameful and ruinous inaction succeeded to an activity which contributed to their fame and riches. The indignation of the merchants communicated itself to all the nation. The first moments of success are moments of intoxication, in which faults seem to be justified as well as hid. But misfortune gives more severity to judgment. The nation then observes more nearly those who govern, and loudly calls for an account of the employment of the power and authority which have been committed to them. The councils of Lewis the Sixteenth are reproached for having wounded the majesty of the first power on the globe, in disavowing, to the face of the universe, the succours which were sent continually to the Americans in a clandestine manner. They are reproached, for having, by a ministerial intrigue, or, by the ascendancy of some obscure agents, engaged the nation in a disastrous war, whilst they should have been occupied in putting the springs of government again in order, in healing the tedious wounds of a reign, of which the latter half was divided between depredation and shame, between the baseness of vice and the convulsions of despotism. They are reproached, for having provoked the contest by insidious politics, for having descended to wrap themselves round with guile, in discourses unworthy of France; for having employed with England the language of a timid audacity, which seems to disown and contradict the projects which are formed, and the sentiments which are uppermost,



permost, in the heart ; a language which can only debase him from whom it proceeds, without deceiving him to whom it is addressed ; and, whilst it brings dishonour, can make that dishonour of no use either to the minister or to the state. How much nobler had it been to say, with all the frankness of dignity ; “ Englishmen, you have abused your victories. Now is the moment for you to shew justice ; or it shall be that of vengeance. Europe is weary of suffering tyrants. She re-enters at length upon her rights. Henceforward, equality or war. Choose.” It is thus that they would have been talked to by that Richelieu, whom every citizen, it is true, should hate, because he was an inhuman butcher, and, that he might reign despotic, murdered his enemies with the hangman’s axe ; but whom, as a minister, the nation is bound to honour, as it was he who first shewed France her dignity, and gave her, amongst the states of Europe, the air which became her power. It is thus that they would have been talked to by that Lewis, who, for forty years together, knew how to be worthy of the age to which he gave a name, who mixed greatness with his very faults, who never, even in adversity and abasement, degraded his people or himself. Ah, for governing a great nation, a great character is requisite. There is no fitness for it in those minds which are indifferent and cold from levity, to which absolute authority is but as it were a kind of last amusement, which carelessly leave great interests floating at the caprice of chance, and are more occupied in preserving than employing power. Why, it is asked again, why did men, who hold in their hands all the authority of the state, and have but to command in order to be obeyed, why did they suffer themselves to be prevented, in all seas, by an enemy whose constitution must of necessity cause slowness in putting their measures in execution ? Why did they, by an inconsiderate treaty, tie themselves down to conditions with the Congress, which they might themselves have held in dependence, by ample and regular



gular supplies? Why, in short, did they not strengthen and confirm the revolution, by keeping always, on the northern coasts of the new world, a squadron which might protect the colonies, and, at the same time, make our alliance to be respected? But Europe, who has her eyes fixed upon us, sees a great design, and no concerted measures; sees, in our arsenals and our ports, immense preparations, and no execution; sees menacing fleets fitted out, and the pompous expence of them rendered almost useless; sees spirit and valour in subalterns, irresolution and timidity in chiefs; sees whatever proclaims, on one hand, the strength and the awe-commanding power of a great people, and, on the other, the slackness and weakness inseparable from its character and views. It is by this striking contradiction between our projects and their execution, between our means and their direction, that the genius of England, stunned for a moment, has resumed his vigour: and it is even now a problem for Europe to resolve, if, in declaring for America, we have not ourselves revived and advanced the English power.

Such are the complaints with which all parts of the kingdom ring, and which we are not afraid to collect together here, and lay before the eyes of authority, if it deigns to read or hear them.

In short, philosophy, whose first sentiment is the desire to see all governments just, and all people happy, in casting her eyes upon this alliance of a monarchy with a people who are defending their liberty, is curious to know its motive. She sees at once, too clearly, that the happiness of mankind has no part in it. She thinks that if the court of Versailles had been determined by the love of justice, it would have settled in the first article of its agreement with America, *That all oppressed people have the right of resisting their oppressors.* But this maxim, which forms one of the laws of England; which a king of Hungary was great enough, when he was ascending the throne, to make one of the constitutions of the state; which was  
adopted



adopted by one of the greatest princes who reigned over the world, Trajan, when he said, before an assembly of the Roman people, to the first officer of the empire, in presenting him with a drawn sword, according to custom upon investing him with his charge, *Use it for me, if I continue just ; against me, if I become tyrannical.* This maxim is too foreign for our feeble and corrupted governments, in which the suffering patiently is so much become a duty, that the sufferer ought to deprecate a sensation of his misery, lest it be punished as a crime.

But the most bitter complaints are directed above all to Spain. She is blamed for her blindness, her wavering, her tardiness, and sometimes even for her infidelity : all which accusations are ill founded.

Some politicians imagined, in seeing France engage herself without necessity in a naval war, that this crown supposed itself powerful enough to divide the British domain, without sharing with an ally the honour of this important revolution. We shall not examine whether the spirit which then reigned in the cabinet of Versailles authorised this conjecture. It is now known that this crown, which from the very beginning of the troubles had sent secret succour to the Americans, was watching for the propitious moment of declaring openly in their favour. The event of Saratoga appeared to it the most favourable conjuncture for proposing to the Catholic king to make the cause a common one. Whether it were that this prince might then judge the liberty of the United States to be contrary to his interest ; whether the resolution might appear to him to be precipitate ; or whether, in short, other political objects might require all his attention, he did not agree to the proposal. From his character it was supposed that repeated solicitation would be useless. After the first experiment, he was so little applied to about this great affair, that it was without his being apprised of it that the Court of Versailles caused it to be signified at St. James's that it had acknowledged the independence of the confederate provinces.

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In the mean time the land and sea forces which Spain employed against the Portuguese in the Brazils were returned home. The rich fleet which she expected from Mexico was arrived in her ports. The treasures which came to her from Peru and from her other possessions were secure. She was free from all inquietude; and mistress of her motions, when she aspired to the glory of being a pacificator between the two hemispheres. Her mediation was accepted, as well by France; whose bold attempts had not been attended with the happy consequences which she had promised herself from them, as by England, who might fear the having an additional adversary to contend with.

Charles the Third sustained with dignity the great part he had to act. He awarded that, laying down their arms, each of the belligerent powers should be maintained in the territories which it should occupy at the time of the convention; that a congress should be formed, in which the different pretensions should be discussed; and that no fresh hostilities should commence 'till after the expiration of a twelvemonth's notice.

This monarch was aware that this arrangement gave to Great-Britain a facility of being reconciled with her colonies, or at least of making them purchase, by great advantages to her commerce, the ports which she occupied in the midst of them. He was aware that it must wound the dignity of the king his nephew, who had engaged to maintain the United States in the totality of their territory. But he would be just; and without forgetting all personal considerations, one cannot be so.

This plan of conciliation was displeasing to Versailles, whose only consolation was ministered by the hope that it would be rejected at London. This hope was not deceived. England could not resolve upon acknowledging the Americans to be really independent; though they were not to be called to the conferences which were to have taken place; though France could not negotiate for them; though their interests were



were to have been taken care of solely by a mediator who was not bound to them by any treaty, and who, perhaps, at the bottom of his heart, was not desirous of their prosperity; though her refusal threatened her with an enemy the more.

It is in such a circumstance as this; it is in the time when noble pride elevates the soul superior to all terror; when nothing is seen more dreadful than the shame of receiving the law, and when there is no doubt or hesitation which to chuse between ruin and dishonour; it is then, that the greatness of a nation is displayed. I acknowledge however that men, accustomed to judge of things by the event, call great and perilous resolutions, heroism or madness, according to the good or bad success with which they have been attended. If then I should be asked, what is the name which shall in years to come be given to the firmness, which was in this moment exhibited by the English, I should answer, that I do not know. But that which it deserves, I know. I know that the annals of the world hold out to us but rarely, the august and majestic spectacle of a nation, which chuses rather to renounce its duration than its glory.

The British ministry had no sooner given their determination, than the Court of Madrid espoused the quarrel of that of Versailles, and consequently that of the Americans. Spain had then sixty-three ships of the line and six on the stocks. France had eighty of the line, and eight upon the stocks. The United States had but twelve frigates; but a great number of privateers.

To all this united force, England had to oppose but ninety-five ships of the line, with twenty-three upon the stocks. The sixteen which were to be seen in her ports, over and above, were unfit for service, and had been converted into prisons or hospitals. Inferior in instruments of war, she was still more so in means of all sorts for their employment. Her domestic dissensions still weakened the resources which remained. It is the nature of governments truly free to be agitated during peace. It is by this intestine motion that the

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spirits



spirits preserve their energy and the continual remembrance of the nation's rights. But in war, all ferments ought to cease, all hatreds to be extinguished, all interests to coalesce and be mutually subservient to the public good. It happened quite otherwise, at this time, in the British isles. Never were there more violent dissensions. Never did contrary pretensions shew themselves in any circumstance with less reserve. The public good was by either faction audaciously trodden under foot. Those houses of parliament, in which the most important questions had formerly been discussed with eloquence, with dignity, and with power, now rung but with the clamours of rage, but with the grossest insults, but with altercations as hurtful as they were indecent. The few true friends of the nation who were remaining, called loudly for another Pitt, for the minister who like him should have *neither relations nor friends*; but this extraordinary man did not appear. And indeed it was pretty generally imagined that this people would now give way, notwithstanding the high-spiritedness of its character, notwithstanding the experience of its admirals, notwithstanding the bravery of its seamen, notwithstanding that energy which a free nation must acquire from vibrating with concussion.

But the empire of chance is a very wide one. Who knows in favour of which side the elements shall declare? By a gust of wind, is a victory given or snatched away. The discharge of a gun disconcerts a fleet by its admiral's death. Signals are not seen or heard; are not obeyed. Experience, valour, skill, are thwarted by ignorance, by jealousy, by treachery, by an assurance of impunity. A fog covers contending navies, and separates or confounds them. A tempest or a calm equally preserves, or equally destroys. Forces are divided by the unequal celerity of ships. The propitious moment is missed, by pusillanimity which lingers, or by rashness which rushes on. Plans shall have been formed with wisdom; but their success shall fail for want of concert in the movements of execution.

By



By an inconsiderate order of the court, what might have proved a proud day, is decided to dishonour. Projects are changed by a minister's disgrace or death. Is it possible that a strict union should long subsist amongst confederates of characters so opposite, as the hasty, light, disdainful Frenchman, the jealous, haughty, sly, slow, circumspective Spaniard, and the American, who is secretly snatching looks at the mother-country, and would rejoice, were they compatible with his independence, at the disasters of his allies? Will these nations long delay, whether they act separately or conjointly, mutually to accuse, complain, and be embroiled? Ought not their greatest hope to be, that multiplied ill successes may do no more than replunge them into that humiliating state from which they endeavoured to emerge, and firmly fix the trident in the hand of England; whilst a considerable defeat or two would bring down this ambitious people from ever ranking again amongst the principal powers of the European world?

Who shall decide then, who can foresee, the event? France and Spain united have powerful means to employ; England, the art of employing her's. France and Spain have their treasures; England, a great national credit. On one side, the multitude of men; on the other, the superiority in the art of working ships, and, as it were, of subjecting the sea in fighting. Here, impetuosity and valour; there, valour and experience. In one party, the activity which absolute monarchy gives to designs; in the other, the vigour and elasticity which liberty supplies. There, losses and grudges to revenge; here, their late glory, with the sovereignty of America, and of the ocean, to recover and preserve. The allied nations have the advantage with which the union of two vast powers must be attended, but the inconvenience likewise which must result from this very union, by the difficulty of harmony and concord both in their designs, and in the execution of them by their respective forces; England is abandoned to



herself, but having only her own forces to direct, she has the advantage of unity in designs, and of a more sure and perhaps more ready disposition in ideas: she can more easily range her plans of defence and offence under a single view.

In order to weigh the matter with exactness, we should yet put into the scales the different energy which may be communicated to the rival nations by a war, which is in a great many respects but a war of kings and ministers, on one side; but, on the other, a truly national war, in which the greatest interests of England are concerned; that of a commerce which produces her riches, that of an empire and a glory on which her greatness rests.

In short, if we consider the spirit of the French nation, opposite to that of the nation with which it is at variance, we shall see that the ardour of the Frenchman is as quickly extinguished as it is inflamed; that he hopes every thing when he begins, that he despairs of every thing as soon as an obstacle shall retard him; that, from his character, his arm must be nerved by the enthusiasm of success, in order to reap more success; that the Englishman, on the contrary, less presumptuous, notwithstanding his natural boldness, at the beginning, knows how, when occasion calls for it, to struggle courageously, to raise himself in proportion as the danger rises, and to gather advantages even from disgrace: like the robust oak to which Horace compares the Romans, which, mutilated by the axe, springs afresh under the strokes which are given it, and draws vigour and spirit from its very losses and its very wounds.

History shews us likewise that few leagues have divided the spoil of the nation against which they have been formed. Athens victorious over Persia; Rome saved from Hannibal; in modern times, Venice escaped from the famous league of Cambray: and, even in our days, Prussia rendered by the genius of one man capable to cope with Europe, should suspend our judgment upon the issue of the present war.

But



But let us suppose that the house of Bourbon have the advantages with which it may have been flattered. What ought to be its conduct?

France is in all points of view the empire the most strongly constituted, of which any remembrance has been preserved in the annals of the world. Without being able to bear any comparison with her, Spain is likewise a very powerful state, and her means of prosperity are continually increasing. The most important concern then of the house of Bourbon ought to be, to obtain pardon of its neighbours for the advantages which it has from nature, which it owes to art, or which have been bestowed on it by events. Should it endeavour to augment its superiority, the alarm would become general, and it would be thought that an universal slavery was threatened. It is perhaps to be wondered at, that the other nations of Europe have not yet thwarted it in its projects against England. The resentment which the injustice and the haughtiness of this proud island have every where inspired, must be the cause of this inaction. But hatred is silent when interest appears. It is possible that Europe may think the weakening of Great-Britain in the old and the new hemisphere contrary to its safety; and that, after having enjoyed the humiliations and dangers of this lofty and tyrannic power, she may at length take arms in its defence. Should it be so, the Courts of Versailles and Madrid would see themselves fallen from the hope which they have conceived of a decisive preponderance upon the globe. These considerations should determine them to hasten their attacks, and not give time, for the forming of new dispositions, to a prophetic or even a jealous policy. Above all, let them stop in time, and not suffer an immoderate desire of humbling their common enemy to make them blind to their own interests.

The United States have shewn openly the project of drawing all North-America to their league. Many measures, that in particular of inviting the people of Canada to rebellion, have given cause to believe that



that this was likewise the wish of France. Spain may be suspected to have equally adopted this idea.

The conduct of the provinces which have shaken off the yoke of Great-Britain is simple, and such as was to be expected. But would not their allies be wanting in foresight, if they should have really the same system?

The new hemisphere must be detached one day from the old. This grand scissure is prepared in Europe, by the collision and fermentation of our opinions; by our being deprived of our rights, which constituted our courage; by the luxury of our courts and the misery of our countries; by the hatred, the endless hatred, between men without heart, honour, or vigour, who possess all else, and robust men, and even virtuous men, who have nothing but life to lose. It is prepared in America, by the increase of population, of cultivation, of industry, and of knowledge. Every thing forwards this rupture, as well the progress of evil in the old world, as in the new the progress of good.

But would it be right for Spain and France, whose possessions in the new world are an inexhaustible source of riches, would it be right for them to precipitate this rupture? Now this rupture is the thing that would precisely happen, were all the north of those regions subjected to the same laws, or bound together by a common interest.

No sooner would the liberty of this vast continent be established, than it would become the asylum of all the off-scouring amongst us, of men of intriguing, seditious spirits, blasted characters, or ruined fortunes. Culture, arts, commerce, would have no charms for such refugees as these. They must have a less laborious and more agitated life. This turn of mind, equally distant from labour or repose, would direct itself towards conquests; and a passion which has so many attractions would easily captivate the first colonists, diverted by a long war from their accustomed occupations. The new people would have completed their preparations for invasion before the report of it had reached our climates. They would chuse their enemy,  
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the field and the moment of their victories. Their thunder would fall always upon seas without defence, or on coasts taken at unawares. In a little while the Southern provinces would become their prey, and supply by the riches of their productions the mediocrity of those of the Northern. Perhaps the possessions of our absolute monarchies might even be candidates for the honour of being admitted to a confederacy with a free people, or would detach themselves from Europe in order to belong but to themselves.

The part which the Courts of Madrid and Versailles should take, if they are free to chuse, is to let two powers subsist in North-America, who may watch, restrain, and counterpoize each other. Then will ages roll away, before England and the republics formed at her expence can come together. This reciprocal distrust will prohibit them from any distant enterprize; and the establishments, belonging to other nations, in the new world, will enjoy without disturbance that tranquility, which, even down to our own times, has been so often troubled.

In all probability, indeed, it is the very order of things which would be most suitable even for the confederate provinces themselves. Their respective limits are not regulated. A great jealousy subsists between the countries to the northward and those to the southward. Political principles vary from one river to another. Great animosities are observed between the inhabitants of the same town, between the members of the same family. Each would throw off from himself the heavy burden of public expences and debts. A thousand principles of division are generally springing in the bosom of the United States. When dangers are once at an end, how is the explosion of so many discontents to be retarded? how are so many unsettled minds, and angered hearts, to be held attached to a common centre? Let the true friends of America reflect upon it, and they will find that the only means to prevent disturbances, amongst that people, is to leave remaining on their frontiers a powerful rival, always disposed to profit by their dissensions. Mo-



Monarchies thrive best with peace and security; inquietudes, and formidable enemies, make republics flourish. Rome had need of Carthage; and he who destroyed the Roman liberty was neither Sylla, nor Cæsar; it was the first Cato, when his narrow and austere politics took her rival away from Rome, by lighting, in the senate, those torches which burnt Carthage to the ground. Even Venice, perhaps, would not have had her government, and her laws, these four hundred years, had she not had at her door powerful neighbours, who might become her enemies or her masters.

But, supposing them thus situated, to what degree of happiness, splendour, and power, may the united provinces in time be raised?

Here, in order to form a sound judgment, let us immediately begin with laying aside the interest which all hearts, not excepting those of slaves, have taken in the generous efforts of a people who exposed themselves to the most dreadful calamities to be free. The name of liberty is so sweet, that all they who fight for it are sure to interest our secret wishes. Their cause is that of the whole human race; it becomes our own. We revenge ourselves of our own oppressors, by giving vent, at least, with liberty, to our hatred against those oppressors who cannot punish it. At the sound of breaking chains, it seems as if our own were about to become lighter; and we think for some moments that we breathe a purer air, in learning that fewer tyrants are to be counted in the world. These great revolutions of liberty, moreover, admonish despots. They warn them not to trust to too long patience in the people, not to trust to impunity without end. Thus, when the laws of society execute vengeance upon the crimes of private individuals, the good man hopes that the punishment of the guilty will, by its terrible example, prevent the commission of new crimes. Terror sometimes supplies the place of justice to the thief, and conscience to the assassin. Such is the source of the warm interest we feel in all the wars of liberty. Such



Such is that with which we have been inspired for the Americans. Our imaginations have been inflamed in their favour. We seem to be present at, and to feel as they do, all their victories and their defeats. The spirit of justice, which is pleased in compensating past misery by happiness to come, is pleased in thinking that this part of the new world cannot fail of becoming one of the most flourishing countries upon the globe. Nay, it has been even supposed, that there is cause to fear lest Europe should one day find her masters in her children. Let us dare to stem the torrent of public opinion, and that of public enthusiasm. Let us not be led astray by imagination, that embellisher of all things, nor by passion, which loves to create illusions, and realizes all it hopes. Our duty is to combat every prejudice, should it be even that which is most conformable to the wishes of our heart. To be true, above all things, is our chief concern, and not to betray the pure and upright conscience which presides over our writings, and dictates every judgment that we pass. At this moment, perhaps, we shall not be believed: but a bold conjecture, which is verified at the end of many ages, does more honour to the historian, than the recital of a long series of facts which cannot be contested; and I write not only for my contemporaries, who will but some years survive me. Yet a few revolutions of the sun, and they and I shall be no more. But I deliver over my ideas to posterity and to time. It is for them to judge me.

The space occupied by the thirteen republics, between the mountains and the ocean, is but of sixty-seven sea-leagues; but upon the coast their extent is, in a strait line, three hundred and forty-five.

In this region the lands are, almost throughout, bad, or of a middling quality. Scarcely any thing but maize grows in the four most northern colonies. The only resource of their inhabitants is fishery, of which the annual product, in money, does not amount to above two hundred and sixty or seventy thousand pounds.

Corn sustains principally the provinces of New-York,

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Jersey,



Jersey, and Pennsylvania. But the soil there is so rapidly become worse than it was, that an acre, which formerly yielded full sixty bushels of wheat, now produces but very rarely above twenty.

Though the soil of Maryland and Virginia is much superior to all the rest, it cannot be said to be very fruitful. The old plantations do not yield above a third of the tobacco which they formerly produced. It is not possible to form new ones; and the cultivators have been obliged to turn their views towards other objects.

North-Carolina produces some corn, but of a quality so inferior, that it is sold for five and twenty, or thirty per cent. less than the other, in all the markets.

South-Carolina and Georgia have a perfectly flat face of country, for the distance of fifty miles from the sea-side. The excessive rains which fall there, finding no means of discharge, form numerous marshes or lakes, in which rice is cultivated, to the great detriment of the slaves and the freemen occupied in this labour. On the intermediate spaces left by these multitudinous little seas, grows an inferior kind of indigo, which must have its place changed every year. Where the country rises from the level, it is but with ungrateful sands or frightful rocks, interspersed, from distance to distance, with pastures of the nature of rush.

The English government, seeing that North-America could never enrich them by the productions proper to that country, thought of the powerful motive of premiums, for the creating, in this part of the new world, of linen, wine, and silk. The poverty of the soil, which would not bear flax, obstructed the first of these views; the badness of the climate, which would not agree with vines, opposed the success of the second; and the want of hands permitted not the third to take place. The society established at London, for the encouragement of arts, manufactures and commerce, was not more happy than the ministry had been. Its premiums did not give birth to any one of the objects, which it had proposed to the activity and industry of those countries.

Great-



Great-Britain was obliged to content herself with selling every year to these countries, merchandize to the amount of something more than two millions. The consumers of this merchandize delivered up to her, exclusively, their indigo, their iron, their tobacco, and their furs. They delivered up to her whatever money, and raw materials, the rest of the globe had given them for their wood, their corn, their fish, their rice, and their salted provisions. Yet the balance was always so much against them, that, when the troubles began, the colonies owed from five to six millions to the mother-country, and had no cash in circulation.

Notwithstanding these disadvantages, there had been successively formed, within the thirteen provinces, a population of two millions nine hundred and eighty-one thousand six hundred and seventy-eight persons, including four hundred thousand negroes. Oppression and intolerance were continually driving thither new inhabitants. The war has now barred this refuge to the unhappy; but the peace will open it to them again; when they will flock thither in greater numbers than ever. They who shall go with projects of cultivation will not have all the satisfaction which they may promise themselves, because they will find the good land, and even the middling, all occupied; and there will be nothing to be offered them but barren sands, unhealthy marshes, or steep mountains. Emigration will be more favourable to manufacturers and artists, tho' even they may, perhaps, gain nothing by their change of country and climate.

We cannot determine, without rashness, what may one day be the population of the United States. Such a calculation, generally pretty difficult, becomes impracticable for a region where the land degenerates very rapidly, and where the expence of labour and improvement is not proportionably answered by the reproduction. If ten millions of men ever find a certain subsistence in these provinces, it will be much. Even then the exportation will be reduced to nothing, or next to nothing: but interior industry will replace  
foreign



foreign industry. The country, within a little, will be able to suffice for itself, provided that the inhabitants know how to make themselves happy by economy and with mediocrity.

Ye people of North-America, let the example of all the nations who have gone before you, and above all that of your mother-country, serve you for instruction. Fear the affluence of gold, which brings with luxury the corruption of manners, the contempt of laws. Fear a too unequal distribution of riches, which exhibits a small number of citizens in opulence, and a great multitude of citizens in extreme poverty; whence springs the insolence of the former, and the debasement of the latter. Secure yourselves against the spirit of conquest. The tranquility of an empire diminishes in proportion to its extension. Have arms for your defence; have none for offence. Seek competency and health in labour; prosperity in the culture of lands, and the workshops of industry; power in manners and virtue. Cause arts and sciences, which distinguish the civilised from the savage man, to flourish and abound. Above all, watch carefully over the education of your children. It is from public schools, be assured, that come the wise magistrates, the capable and courageous soldiers, the good fathers, the good husbands, the good brothers, the good friends, the good men. Wherever the youth are seen depraved, the nation is on the decline. Let liberty have an immovable foundation in the wisdom of your laws, and let it be the indestructible cement to bind your provinces together. Establish no legal preference amongst the different forms of worship. Superstition is innocent, wherever it is neither persecuted nor protected; and may your duration, if it be possible, equal the duration of the world!

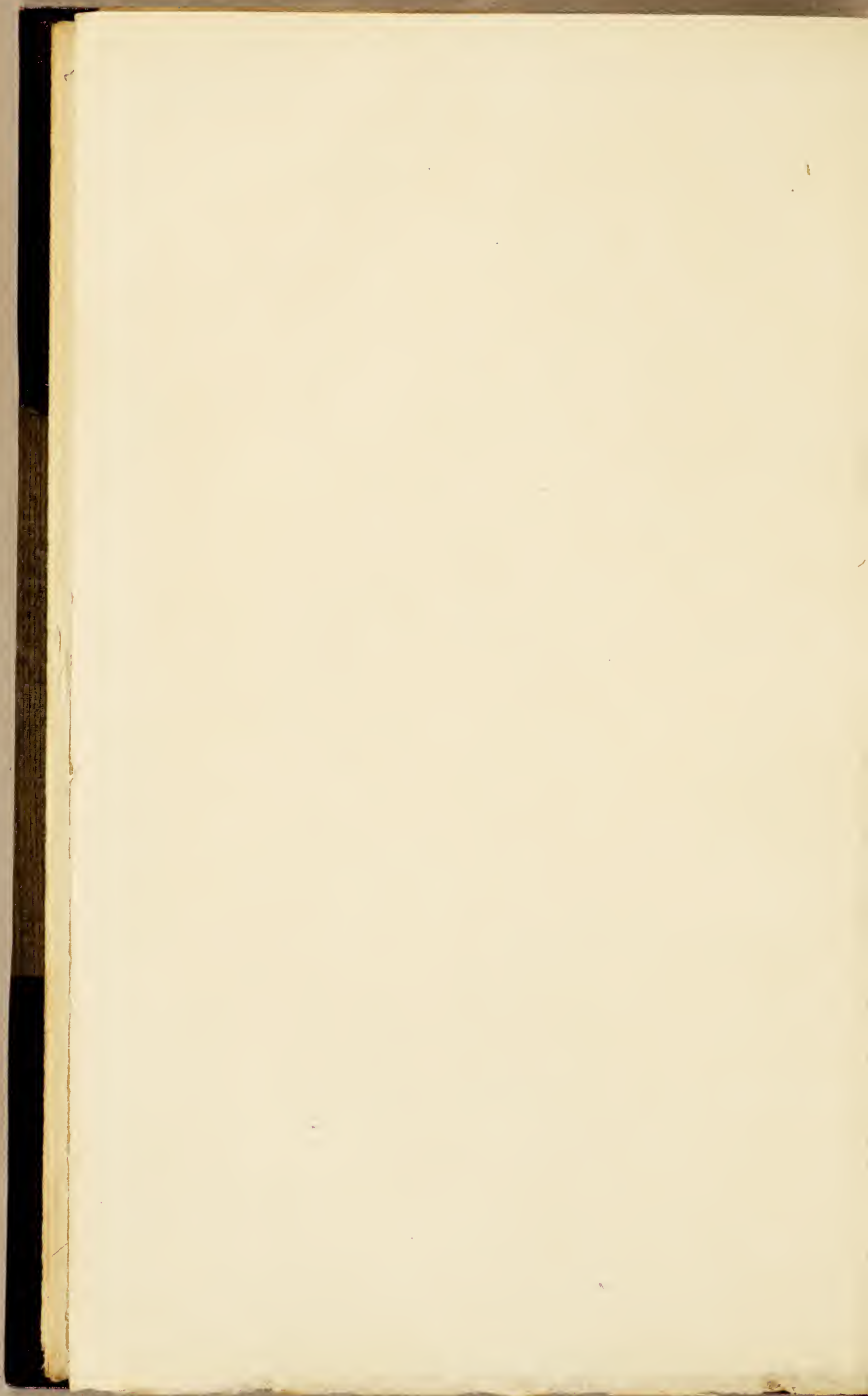
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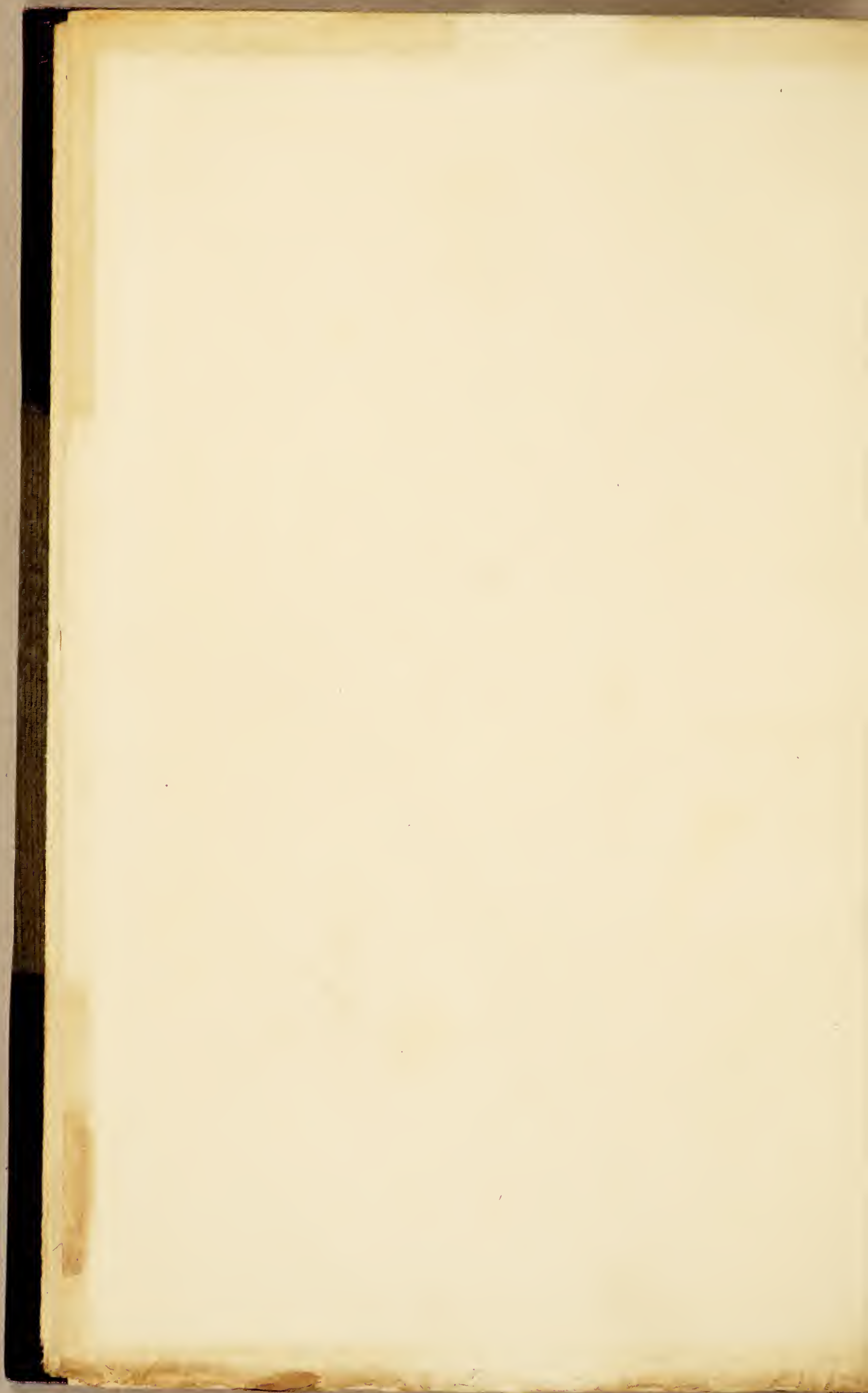














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